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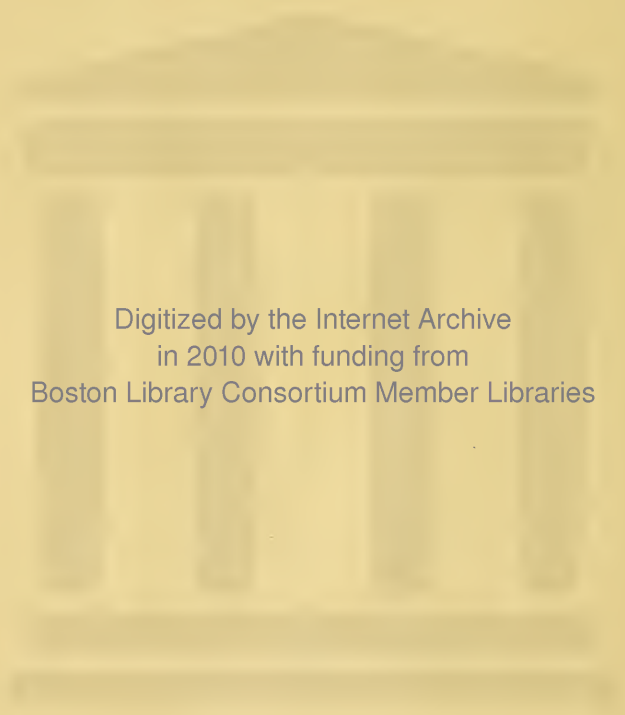
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**A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN  
MISSIONS**



# A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

BY

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# A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

## I

### THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

THE religion of Jesus Christ is a missionary religion. The work and example of its Founder destined it to be such, its early spirit was missionary, and its history is a missionary history. Whenever it has lost its missionary quality it has so far lost its character and ceased to be itself. Its characteristic temper has always been missionary, its revivals of life and power have been attended by quickening of missionary energy, and missionary activity is one of the truest signs of loyalty to its character and its Lord.

What makes Christianity a missionary religion? By virtue of what qualities does it thus tend and seek to spread itself throughout the world? By what right does it offer itself to all men as successor and substitute, in place of all their religions?—for this is what its missionary character

implies. Two general grounds for this missionary character of Christianity may be mentioned, of which one is external and the other internal. The presentation of them of course implies that for the present purpose Christianity is regarded as one of the religions of the world, and is brought into comparison with the others.

1. Christianity is properly reckoned in the class of universal religions.

In its origin and history, Christianity stands distinguished from all the ethnic religions, or religions of some particular nation or race. Many religions have had their home exclusively within single races or peoples, making no effort, and showing no ability, to go farther in the world. Such were the religions of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia: such also is Hinduism, which is the religion of India alone, and reveals no missionary feeling toward mankind. Such is the religion of China, which goes beyond its native realm only to influence kindred peoples.

There are good reasons why ethnic religions are not missionary. They have sprung up as expressions of the life, thought, and experience of the peoples that cherish them. They have not been

founded, they have grown. Whatever vital substance they contain has not been brought to the people, but brought forth from them. Hinduism is the expression of the religious genius of India, developed and organized through the long course of ages. Confucianism is the offspring of the mind of China. But races of men differ deeply in the quality of their religious genius and the course of the experience that develops it, and a religion that has grown up in the life of one people is not likely to commend itself to the mind of another. The religion of India has, at its best, a philosophical quality and a spiritual tone quite foreign to that of China. The difference corresponds to a difference in the national minds; and the result is that neither race could possibly accept, or even justly apprehend, the religion of the other. Thus ethnic religions are naturally limited in their field. Each, representing a people, is naturally limited to a people.

There is another reason. If the mental and spiritual energy of a people goes to the building-up of a religion, it mainly expends itself in that work. A great religion is of slow growth, and by the time that it comes to anything like full development, the vitality that started it is likely to be spent. The

later stages of a religion are apt, as experience shows, to be stages of formalism, in which no outreaching impulse arises. To carry an ethnic religion to a new people would be a more exacting task than to produce it, for the lack of adaptation to a new field would have to be encountered and overcome; and so great and enterprising a movement would probably be too much for a people that had spent its spiritual strength in working out its own religious genius. Thus ethnic religions naturally tend to remain ethnic, and not to become universal.

There are other religions that are not ethnic, — religions that have not grown up as the fruit of a people's life, but have been established and proclaimed by a founder, who had obtained some fresh and vital conceptions. Such are Buddhism, Parseeism, Mohammedanism, Christianity. It is true that these religions all had their roots in the past, back of their founders, and drew an inheritance from ethnic faiths more ancient; yet they arose through the mission and labor of individual founders, who brought new formative ideas in religion which the people needed but had not found. These religions have all given proof of their higher quality and larger adaptation, by becoming more or less independent of national and racial boundaries. Not wholly ethnic in their origin, they



are not ethnic in their field and range. India produced its Hinduism, and kept it. But Buddhism, though rooted in the old religion of India, received its impulse from a great religious soul, and was offered by him to his people, who could never have developed it; and though Buddhism did not permanently supplant the old religion in India, it went forth to conquer other races, which the old religion had never thought of doing. In like manner, all the non-ethnic religions have had the missionary character, and have borne their messages to men of various blood and nationality.

Pre-eminent in impulse and efficiency among these missionary religions is Christianity. It was cradled in Judaism, the religion in which its Founder and his first followers were born. In Judaism the ethnic and the universal were at strife. Its best spirit was catholic, but the conditions of its life were national, and its temper tended to become exclusive. Abroad, in the Jewish dispersion, the element of universality was gaining in force when Christ came; but in Palestine the ethnic was triumphing and narrowness was becoming intense. As for the early Christianity, we know how it hastened to disentangle itself from Judaism and address itself to the Gentiles, the nations of the world. We know, too, how

great was its success. As soon as it endeavored to bless men anywhere and everywhere, taking them as it found them, it proved itself adapted to men as men, irrespective of race and nationality. Throughout the world that was then within reach, it went with power, triumphing over a thousand difficulties and winning successes of a noble order. It recognized no limits upon its field, but called itself universal, a faith for all. When fresh races called barbarian came in its way, it laid hold upon them with a divine energy, and accomplished more for them perhaps than it had done for the civilized. Its success was not perfect according to its own standard, for the agencies through which it had to work were imperfect, and it was unavoidably influenced in turn by what it conquered; yet it went forth to men of various races as a conquering faith, and proved itself a universal religion, worthy to be offered to all the world.

Ever since, whenever Christianity has had its spiritual health, it has been strong in missionary activity. It has had success with races civilized and with races savage. Great undertakings are still before it, and the works already in hand are far from finished; but in modern times, when the world was becoming open and known, it rose to the missionary



enterprise with faith and vigor. Far beyond other religions, Christianity has shown itself catholic and aggressive toward humanity. It now stands forth as a missionary religion, offering itself to all mankind; and in so doing it only carries forward its ancient claim and maintains its historic character. In its modern attitude, as well as in its early career, it deserves to be reckoned among the universal religions, and at the head of them all.

2. Coming to the interior view of the matter, we may say that Christianity is a missionary religion because it claims, and justly claims, to be superior to all other religions.

Something has made Christianity the boldest of the religions that lay claim to universality; and that something is an inward sense of its own divine excellence, surpassing all other faiths. In all its missionary epochs, this deep conviction has prevailed, that no other religion could compare with Christianity in fulness of truth and life, and in richness of provision for the true welfare of men. This consciousness that it has the best, and is the best, is what has impelled Christianity to missionary effort. Evidently such a conviction is needed, if a religion is to be aggressively missionary. Christianity be-

gan with this conviction, and has never lost it. Naturally, in proportion to the clearness, intelligence, and energy of this conviction will be the energy of missionary zeal. And as ages advance, and the greatness and seriousness of the undertaking become ever more impressive, this sense of the sufficiency and superiority of the Christian faith, and its adaptation to all men, needs to be growing ever deeper and more inspiring. There is need to-day of a keener and profounder sense of the excellence of Christianity than the Christian people have ever possessed.

That a claim of superiority ought to accompany missionary effort needs no proof. A religion that seeks to displace another ought to know itself the better of the two. A man who goes to a foreign people asking them to accept his religion in place of their own, has no right to be on such an errand unless he has a conviction, intelligent as well as sincere, that the change will make them richer in truth and better in life. If we venture to cry, "Christianity for the world," we imply that the entire body of humanity would do well to abandon all its religions and take ours in their stead. Unless we feel that this is true, we shall not offer Christianity with power, and unless it really is true, our offer is an impertinence.

This claim of superiority must be fairly made. We must not assume that to claim superior excellence is to prove it. A claim proves nothing. Our claim calls for a comparison whereby it may be sustained. Comparison cannot be evaded, and we should not desire to escape it. The comparison, too, must be an honest one. We must not be content to compare the best in our religion with something that is low or unworthy in Buddhism or the religion of China. Point must be measured against point, excellence must be compared with excellence, defect with defect. Christianity must appear better than the best of the faith that it seeks to displace. And we cannot do righteous missionary work by merely asserting the superiority of our religion; we need that the qualities in which it excels should be clearly discerned by our minds and felt by our hearts, so that we can show reason for our claim. Christianity offers itself as worthy to take the place of all the other religions of mankind; it is necessary, therefore, to learn what it is that renders it worthy of this supreme honor. This a missionary needs to know, and the church at home, conducting missionary enterprises, needs to know the same.

Therefore, if we are rightly to approach the study of Christian missions, we must at the outset inquire

what internal quality it is that makes Christianity the universal religion, adapted to all men and best for all men, truer than all truth outside itself, and worthy to be received with joy by every creature. Nothing but a clear and satisfactory answer to this question will establish Christian missions on a firm foundation.

What then is that excellence in Christianity by virtue of which it is entitled to be a missionary religion and deserves to be received by all men? Christianity is entitled to be a missionary religion, and to displace all other religions, because of its God.

There are many glories in the religion of Jesus Christ, and it can do many services for men; but its crowning glory, or rather the sum of all its glories, is its God. Christianity has such a conception of God as no other religion has attained; and, what is more, it proclaims and brings to pass such an experience of God as humanity has never elsewhere known. It is in this that we find that superiority which entitles Christianity to offer itself to all mankind.

It is necessary to tell in few words what this God is who is the glory of Christianity and the ground of its boldness in missionary advances, — this God so infinitely excellent that all men may

well afford to forget all their own religions, if they may but know him. The God of Christianity is one, the sole source, Lord and end of all. He is holy, having in himself the character that is the worthy standard for all beings. He is love, reaching out to save the world from sin and fill it with his own goodness. He is wise, knowing how to accomplish his heart's desire. He is Father in heart, looking upon his creatures as his own, and seeking their welfare. All this truth concerning himself he has made known in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, in whom his redemptive will has found expression, and his saving love has come forth to mankind.

That the glory of Christianity is its God may most conveniently be shown by bringing this excellence into comparison with other excellences on the strength of which Christianity is often commended. Various excellences have been placed at the front as justifying the missionary endeavor and the offering of our religion to the world; but when they are compared with this excellence, it will be found that they take their place as specifications under it, or as forms in which this supreme glory manifests itself.

Christianity is often offered as worthy to be uni-



versal because it is ethically noble. It is entitled to supplant other religions because it surpasses them all in its conceptions of human duty, and in its power to secure the realization of its ideals. It introduces solid and efficient ethical principles, and it produces high character, in a manner known to no other religion.

This statement is entirely true, but it is incomplete. It is weakness to declare the ethical greatness of our religion without telling what eternal reality it rests upon. Why is Christianity ethically noble and powerful? Christianity has an ethical God. It knows a God with a character, and that the best possible character, — a perfectly good God. It declares that the character of God has been shown to us men, and lived out in our presence in the character of his son Jesus Christ. It declares that the character of God is the standard for men, and that the good God has drawn near in self-revelation, on purpose to help men reach this standard. In its God, Christianity has the substance of the noblest ethics and the sure hope of attainment to high character; for its God is the real and living God, whose character is a reality, and whose love for goodness is the most powerful ethical fact in existence. Thus the claim that Christianity may offer itself

as universal because of its ethical nobleness is only a form of the broad claim that Christianity may offer itself as universal because of its God.

Another commendation of Christianity lies in the same region, but bears a different form. Christianity is proposed as universal because it is a religion of salvation; it offers deliverance from sin, of which man everywhere is in need. Sin is the sad and dark element in the universal life; the burden of it has oppressed religion in all ages; the religions of the world are aware of it, but know no relief from it. Christianity comes with the offer of salvation, deliverance from sin and its evils, and thereby meets the universal need. It not only offers such deliverance, but introduces the experience of it, and is thereby commended as the religion for all.

Gloriously true as this statement is, it is no more complete than the other. What is the ground of that deliverance from sin which Christianity proposes? On how broad and deep a foundation does the promise rest? What reason can be given, sufficient to justify the weary world in expecting so great a gift? The testimony of Christianity is that the deliverance from sin which it offers is grounded in the heart and character of God. A Christian is able to say, "My God, the only God

that lives, is the Saviour. The one God of all the world offers deliverance from sin to all the world." Christianity perceives, and declares, that the living God is a being who will do such work as this for men. It does not make the unsupported declaration that men can be delivered from sin; it gives the deeper and broader teaching that the God of all has the heart of a Saviour. It proclaims a real and living God who cares for his creatures, — a holy Being who is a friend to man and has come near in Christ on purpose to deliver men from sin and impart to them the likeness of his own character. This is the God whom Christianity proclaims, and its proclamation is confirmed by the Christian experience, which has learned that it is true. Christianity is, above all others, the religion of experience, and its characteristic experience is experience of deliverance from sin through trustful fellowship with the Saviour-God whom we know in Christ. Thus the claim that Christianity is worthy to be universal because it is a religion of salvation, proves to be no detached and unsupported claim; it resolves itself into the more fundamental claim that Christianity deserves to be universal because it proclaims and knows a saving God.

It is a common thing to hear Christianity com-



mended as worthy to be universal on the ground that it is in the broadest sense a hopeful religion. A tone of pessimism and despair, or at least of gloom and cheerlessness, sounds through the religions of the world; but the religion of Christ breathes hopefulness and strength, and has banished despair from millions. This again is perfectly true, but incomplete. Whence comes the hopefulness? Christianity obtains its hopeful character from the character of its God. It discerns a living God so good and strong and trustworthy that hope comes in from the knowledge of him, for the reinforcement of all that is good in his world. Change and lower the Christian conception of God, and the hopefulness of Christianity fades away. If our religion seems a glorious boon for all the world because of the contrast that it offers to the cheerlessness of other faiths, that means simply that there is a glorious contrast between all other gods and the living God whom it makes known.

Christianity is often proposed as adapted to all men because it is a religion of brotherhood, making of mankind one family. It has a history that is honorable though imperfect in this respect, for it does overleap barriers, ignore distinctions, reconcile differences, and establish a recognized unity of man.

Though it is far from having attained to its own ideal, its ideal is human fraternity, as wide as the human race. But this proposal also is incomplete. How came this ideal into existence? Christianity learned human brotherhood from divine fatherhood. There can be no family without a head, no brothers without a father. The Christian testimony is, "One is your Father, and all ye are brothers." It is when God is known as one, and is felt to be a genuine Father, that men deeply feel themselves to be of one family. How many attempted brotherhoods have fallen apart for want of a father! but Christianity sets the keystone in the arch. The Christian brotherhood in doctrine and experience comes from the Christian doctrine and experience of God. If Christianity is adapted to all the world because it makes brother-men, that means that it knows a God to whom all men sustain one relation, and in whom all may live one life.

Thus the main commendations of Christianity as a religion for all men are found to be forms or developments of the Christian doctrine of God. He is its glory.

It must be added that in the God whom Christianity thus knows and proclaims, religion and ethics

both find their utmost satisfaction. In this strength and glory Christianity is unique. The object of worship and the standard of character and conduct are one and the same. There is but one object of worship, — God; and there is but one standard of character, — God. He whom we adore is the one whom we imitate, and we do both for one reason, because we know that he is worthy both of imitation and of worship. Hence in Christianity, when it is rightly discerned, these two parts of human nature, the religious and the ethical, need never come into any conflict, or fall apart so as to seek satisfaction separately. Other religions have not attained to this. They have worshipped their gods, from a variety of motives, but have not had in their gods any sufficient and satisfactory standard of character. They could seek their favor and help, but could not imitate their conduct. Hence for ethics men have been compelled to turn to philosophy. Not having deities good enough to serve for example and inspiration in goodness, they have had to think their moral questions out for themselves, and be content with such moral foundations as human relations might afford. It is both legitimate and necessary to think these questions out, and human relations do constitute a true source of knowledge in ethics; but there is

something lacking when religion does not come with power to the support of the ethical nature of man. Christianity worships its God because he is so good. It is just because he is so worthy of imitation that he is worthy of adoration. The one Being satisfies both demands of the soul, and satisfies them in the highest degree. He who knows the God and father of the Lord Jesus Christ can always rejoice and rest in his God. Both as a moral being and as a worshipper he can say without reserve, that knowledge of his God affords him honest satisfaction and perfect rest.

The conception of God with which Christianity addresses the world is the best that man can form or entertain. If such a God is real, all best things are possible. When Christianity goes out to meet the world, it goes with a declaration which the world has never known as true, namely, the declaration that such a God is real. It says that the only God that exists is the good God and Father of Jesus Christ. It declares that he is near, approachable, tender, approaching men with desire to bring the blessing of his goodness to all souls and to impart it to the general life of humanity. It declares this on the ground of God's gracious self-

revelation in Jesus Christ, and on the ground of rich and satisfactory experience in innumerable souls, confirming the message that Christ has borne concerning him. God has offered himself to be known by men in actual experience, it says, and consequently God is known by many men, and may be known by more. The reality of the holy and gracious Saviour-God is the dearest and surest certainty to innumerable human beings, and may come to be the same to innumerable others. On the ground of the revelation and the experience, Christianity proclaims this living God with confidence to those who have not known him yet, and summons them to acquaintance with the God whose fulness in the human soul is life eternal.

It does not need to be shown that the religion of such a God has rights among men. A religion that can proclaim such a God, and proclaim him on the ground of experience, is adapted to all men, and is worthy of all acceptance. Since Christianity is the religion of such a God, Christianity deserves possession of the world. It has the right to offer itself boldly to all men, and to displace all other religions, for no other religion offers what it brings. It is the best that the world contains. Because of its doctrine and experience of the perfect

God, it is the best that the world can contain. Its contents can be unfolded and better known, but they cannot be essentially improved upon. At heart, Christianity is simply the revelation of the perfect God, doing the work of perfect love and holiness for his creatures, and transforming men into his own likeness so that they will do the works of love and holiness toward their fellows. Than this nothing can be better. Therefore Christianity has full right to be a missionary religion, and Christians are called to be a missionary people.



## II

### THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE IN CHRISTIANITY

THE Christian people who have the work of missions to perform, must of course be influenced by some motive, or motives, impelling them to it. It is a great work, and the motive must be deep, strong, self-justifying, and permanent, if the work is to be done with a worthy vigor and persistency. If Christianity is really a missionary religion, it must provide some such motive or group of motives.

What constitutes the missionary motive in Christianity? In seeking to answer this large and important question, we shall do well to consider the gospel of Christ, which is the occasion of Christian missions and provides their main message, in three aspects. We may consider what the gospel is to the three parties who are concerned with it. We may inquire what the gospel is to God who gave it, what it is to us who have received it, and what it is to the men who have not received it yet. The missionary impulse is the response of the Christian heart to the truth of God seen in these three aspects;

and the threefold inquiry that is now proposed will lead to a fair knowledge of the missionary motive.

1. What is the gospel of Christ to God? To God, the gospel of Christ is his own chosen and characteristic means of imparting the best spiritual good to the world, but a means that requires human co-operation for its success.

The inner meaning of Christianity we know well. It is God's own mission. It is his gift to the world, dictated by his love in view of the world's sin and need. In Christ, God came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. The whole work of Christ was God's own personal mission and work, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. From Christ till now, the gracious work of Christianity has been the continuation of this mission of God. His motive is love, acting in the interest of holiness. In his holiness he hates sin, and in his love he desires to deliver men from it. Thus the present work of the gospel in the world stands forth as the chosen work of the great God our Father, the work which the best of beings loves to do for us men. By this quality of love and holiness combined it is commended as the best and noblest of works, most worthy even of God himself.



Yet the work of God through the gospel involves as necessary to its success the free and generous co-operation of men. The object of endeavor is the moral transformation of human individuals, and of the mass of mankind. It is the nature of men as social beings to influence one another, and from one another to receive influence. So there is nothing mysterious about God's wanting messengers for his grace, or calling for bearers of the tidings of his blessing. The gracious activity of the divine Spirit does not render such human action needless. A human world must be reached by human messengers. Human life must be transformed through human activity. The reporting of the truth and the carrying of the grace of God to practical effect must depend upon the consent and action of human beings. We are not speaking now of what the gospel is to us, but of what it is to God himself. Even from his point of view, it is a work of holy grace that requires the co-operation of men, if it is to come to full effect in the human world.

In this view of it, evidently, the missionary motive consists in the holy and honorable desire to join with God in the best of works. If we prefer to read the name of Christ instead of the name of God in this sentence, the meaning will be essentially

the same, for Christ is the expression and representative of the invisible God in the activity of redemptive love. The desire to join with God and Christ in this work is a perfectly intelligible missionary motive, and an altogether worthy one. Why is it not also a sufficient motive? Even if this desire stood alone, it might well satisfy our best demand for a high and satisfactory motive in missionary service. The work is God's work, and it shall be ours. If to any one this statement seems a cool statement, and the motive looks like a cool motive, we may remember what the gospel of Christ is: it is an utterance of the infinite love of God in action. There is room for all warmth of love in the joining with God that is proposed.

Yet the name of Christ adds to the motive. The motive is intensified, personalized, and brought home to us with power, when we remember Christ. Our Master Jesus loved us and gave himself for us, and for all men. Him we love, and to him our hearts go out in loyal devotion. He does not bring to us another appeal or command than that of God, and if we think of our loyalty to him as something distinct from our loyalty to God, we do not yet understand our Saviour. Nevertheless we feel God's love in Christ more readily and profoundly than

God's love apart from him, and through the love of Christ we find the true way to answer and honor the love of God. Thus, while it is true that Christ is nothing to us apart from God, it is also true that Christ himself is to us unspeakably precious, and lays a direct claim upon us by what he has done for us. Christ touches us by the power of the cross. "I have died for you," he says to us, and thereby he makes an unparalleled appeal, which we cannot reject without being false to ourselves. We belong to him by the purchase of love, and we are not our own but his. At the same time Christ touches us also by the power of his own excellence and worthiness. We love him not only because he first loved us, but because he is worthy to be loved and followed. Christ has proved himself the true leader of men, loyalty to whom is the best human privilege. Christ brings to us the appeal of God and brings it through a noble and tender divine human mediation. The command to "go and make disciples of all the nations" is a summons to join with God in performing the work of salvation for the world, and not less to join with Christ in the same, and Christ's part in the appeal and the motive is a great and precious one. In loving loyalty to Christ, the Saviour of the world, we find a quick and

tender missionary motive which lays hold on the emotional wealth of our nature, and brings an appeal to which the heart can respond with the full approval of the judgment. This motive has wrought powerfully to enlist laborers for missionary service. Thousands have responded to the love and call of God ministered through Christ, and gone forth to bless the world with the Christian message.

Why has not the call of God to join with him sufficed to make all Christians missionaries as a matter of course? One reason is found in the imperfection of all that is human, and the unresponsiveness of men to God. But another reason is found in the prevailing misconception of what it is to be saved. Many have supposed that to be saved was to be taken care of, and brought to a state of welfare and a place of safety. Salvation has been regarded as complete when one's personal welfare has been provided for. But to be saved is to be brought into moral fellowship with God. It is to receive something of God's character: hence, to be saved is to become in heart a saviour, in fellowship with him to whom we owe our salvation. Christ is God's gift to the world: Christ, therefore, should be our gift to the world, if we are among the saved. But if we consent to think of our salvation as ending

upon ourselves, and completed when we are provided for, of course we shall feel but faintly the impulse to join with God in doing for others what has been done for us. The narrowing of the idea of salvation is a main cause of the weakness of the missionary motive.

2. What is the gospel of Christ to us who have received it? To us who have received it, the gospel of Christ is the best good of life. Christ has given us the gift of religion in the best form in which it has ever been possessed by men, and made us sure that no higher form of religion is to be expected than that to which he is the guide: and at the same time the gospel of Christ is the means of awakening in those who receive it, a love toward other men that impels to missionary endeavor. In a word, the gospel of Christ gives us possession of the best, and moves us to love mankind.

How that which Christ brings us is the best, we have already shown in speaking of the missionary character of Christianity. What Christ brings into life is the reality and experience of the good God. It is perfectly true that this is a religious gift, and that no other conceivable gift could be so helpful and inspiring as this in the field of religion. But



it is inadequate to say that the gift of the good God is effective in the religious field, for it extends in its unimaginable beneficence to the entire field of life. There is no part of life or thought which the gift of Christ does not touch, and he touches nothing that he does not redeem and glorify. Trustful recognition of the good God transforms existence. We have scarcely yet begun to know how full and glorious a blessing we have in our perception of the God whom Christ reveals. The glory of such knowledge is thus far only in its morning twilight. Yet it is already glory indeed to the souls that discern it, and it is certain that this gift, brought home to us by Jesus Christ, is capable of making all things new for us and for all men who may come to possess it. We have the best in religion, and we have the best in life, in our possession of the gospel of Christ.

As to what our duty is if we do possess the best in religion and the best in life, this is either a very puzzling question, or no question whatever. If selfishness discusses it, it may be a hard question to decide; for while there is something to be said in favor of generosity, there is much in favor of indifference to our fellow-men. But the Christian spirit brushes all selfish complications aside, and finds no

question at all. We claim a religion of grace and truth, and this surely ought to make us unselfish. If the sense of possessing a noble religion makes us selfish, or confirms us in selfish ways, we do not yet know what a noble religion is. It would be difficult to analyze and estimate the various moral evils that lurk in such a sentiment as this, — “The best in religion is none too good for me, but some religion that does not bring deliverance from impurity, superstition, or despair is the best for some other man whom God has created.” Truth and grace, saving gifts that make a new thing of life, have come to us undeserved from God’s free mercy. They would do as much for other men as they have done for us, and they can do far more for all men than they have yet done for any. “Freely ye have received, freely give,” is good morals. When the gift is precious to every one who receives it, there is no question of duty as to giving it. We can do men the best of services, and we ought.

It is plain, however, that before the possession of the best in religion and in life can become effective as a missionary motive, it must be reinforced by a consciousness, or sense, of possessing the best in religion and in life. It is our nature to feel before we act. It is the consciousness of having the best,

and of having what the world needs, that serves as missionary motive, impelling Christians to missionary endeavor.

The sense of possessing the unparalleled good is characteristic of Christianity, whenever Christianity is at its best. The enthusiastic conviction of an ardent faith is a fruit of the fact that Christianity is a religion of experience. Instead of being a mere doctrine, however true, it is a life; and the experience of it consists in the possession of something that the soul finds inexpressibly worthy and precious. Forgiveness of sins, fellowship with God, the warmth of love, the vision of faith, the glow of hope, the beauty of holiness, the joy of usefulness, — all this is more precious than words can tell. There is no need of learning or high intelligence to make it so; a simple-minded Christian, living in the experience of faith, hope, and love, can scarcely fail to have the sense of possessing the noblest good. The certainty that the saving Christ is the supreme gift of the gracious God, is no monopoly of the pulpits that preach it, or the schools that teach it; it is the common property of the Christian people. Herein is the best support of the missionary spirit. So long as the Christian people really feel the supreme value of their Lord and their life, the missionary impulse will



continue powerful. God's best and richest gift, appreciated, brings its own call to missionary endeavor.

Hence the missionary impulse in this form depends for its vitality upon the vigor of the Christian life in the Christian people. Only a living church can permanently be a strong missionary church, for only a living church can so feel the value of its blessings as to be impelled to offer them to the world. Hence various influences may depress the missionary impulse, by diminishing the sense of blessing in the Christian people. Worldly and unspiritual living, in which Christians sin against their conscience and their love, diminishes the sense of the preciousness of Christ. If a worldly and unspiritual church conducts missions, it will probably be languidly done. In like manner, anything like scepticism as to the great spiritual realities must diminish the force of the missionary motive. In an age of material forces and successes, there is constant temptation to see little preciousness in a spiritual faith, and feel little impulse to extend it among men. In fact, all demoralizing and unspiritualizing influences of every kind take effect in weakening the missionary motive. It cannot be too clearly seen or too firmly held for truth that the living Christian experience, is the indispensable storehouse of power for Christian missions.

This does not mean, however, that the sense of the excellence of our religion is solely a matter of feeling, dependent altogether upon our inner joy. The sense of the excellence of our religion can be reinforced by knowledge. As acquaintance with the world increases, Christianity comes into comparison with other faiths, and its superiority is tested and confirmed. With no one could we think for a moment of exchanging religions. This may seem to be the utterance of pride or self-will or custom, affirming the superiority of what is our own, or of ignorance, declaring the excellence of the only religion that we are acquainted with. But it need not be this. There is no room for doubt anywhere that the religion that we have in Jesus Christ infinitely excels all others. Comparison of the best in our religion with the best in other religions will confirm our sense of the glory of Christianity, and show fresh reasons why we should give it to the world. Yet we must remember that the comparative study of religions, taken by itself, makes no missionaries, nor can it be relied upon to sustain the missionary activity of the church. We might discern ever so clearly the excellence of Christianity, and yet not be impelled to do anything toward extending it. The missionary motive is spiritual at heart, springing from

the Christian experience. Study may confirm this motive, and general intelligence ought to bring all dwellers in a Christian land to the support of missions; but the motive itself, if it is to be strong enough to attain independent efficiency, must be the fruit of the Spirit working in the Christian life.

To those who possess it, the gospel of Christ is the awakener of love toward other men, and this love is provocative of missionary endeavor. By love is meant that personal interest by which one values another, and desires to do him good, even though it be at cost to one's self. Love is not to be confounded with liking, which may or may not be its companion. The Christian love for mankind is the continuation on the human plane of God's love for the world, by virtue of which he came in Christ to bear our burdens, and save us from our sins. God loved the world, and loves it still, and Christ brings Christians to love it with him. Such love is evidently a matter of the heart. To profess it is not necessarily to have it, and to approve it is not to be moved by it. It is a Christian fruit, and needs to be nourished and kept alive from above. Evidently such love, where it exists, is a genuine missionary force. Here is the deepest and strongest of outgoing motives to effort

for others' good. When Christians love in fellowship with God, not in vain does the world call them, even as it did not call to him in vain.

It is often alleged, however, that such love has no existence. Any love of ours for distant and unknown human beings, it is said, can be nothing more than a mere sentiment, not worth talking about, fit only to be laughed at. It will not survive the discovery of the want of liking. What is untested love worth? and if this alleged love were tested by acquaintance, it would quickly vanish away.

As to this, it is very true that we do well to be careful about our claims. It is better to show love in work than in talk. The best that we have, in any following of Christ, is poor enough. Very likely we might feel some sharp repulsions if we saw the peoples to whom our compassionate thoughts go out from afar. Empty sentiment concerning them has doubtless often been expressed. Nevertheless, the Christian interest in distant and unknown men is no poor and foolish thing, fit only to be sneered at. Sentimental it may sometimes be, but not always. A Christlike love for men who have not been seen, and who if they were seen might not be liked, has existed times without number. What is better, it has been tested and has not been found wanting.

Christian missionaries are always subjected to this test, and it is often a most trying one. They often find liking and the sense of affinity conspicuously absent when they first encounter the people to whom they have gone in the name of the divine love. They have often borne testimony that nothing less than a supernatural love, the gift of God himself, could have carried them through and maintained their Christian purpose, when they were brought face to face with the people with whom they had to do. Yet beneath the lack of liking there proved to be a vital strength of love. Likes and dislikes rest upon things comparatively superficial, but the Christlike love takes hold on permanent qualities and abiding values, and is often able to assert itself in the face of repulsions ever so sharp and painful. Christian acquaintance with men in all nations enhances our sense of their value, and reveals to us more and more in them that is worthy of our affectionate interest. Cynical contempt of human beings is far too common in the world, and even among Christians, but it is not often found in missionaries. Love stands the test, and even increases under it; and experience proves that the power to love like God is the crowning gift of grace to men in Christ.

It is certain that the Christlike love, imperfect



though it has always been, has been most effective in the inauguration and support of Christian missions. In combination with the fact that to its possessors Christianity is the best of all things in religion and in life, this noble grace of love forms a worthy and powerful missionary motive.

3. What is the gospel of Christ to the men who have not yet received it? To the men who have not yet received it, the gospel of Christ, or Christianity with its blessings in religion and in life, is the good gift of which they are urgently in need.

This statement is challenged at the outset. It is sometimes conceded that in Christianity we have found what constitutes for us the best good in religion and life, but denied that Christianity is essential to the best good in religion and in life for some others. For the peoples that have it, Christianity is doubtless the best; but other religions, it is said, may be as good, and even better, for the peoples that have been reared in them and are familiar with the good that they can do.

But this claim we meet with a positive denial. We affirm that there is no good substitute for the God of Jesus Christ. Our Christian religion is the

religion of the perfectly good God, who commends himself to our confidence as the actually existing God. The religion of the good living God is the best religion for all men. No other can possibly be so good for any man. We find truth in other religions, and willingly recognize it, and acknowledge their value in the history of mankind; but there is nothing actual or conceivable that can take the place in human life of the good God whom we know in Jesus Christ. When he can be known, it is not a question whether it is well for any one to remain in ignorance of him. Every soul needs to know him. The excellences of Christianity are excellences that appeal to universal need. It is not best for any one to hold a religion that is acquainted with sin but not with forgiveness; that holds a moral standard but lacks the inspiration to virtue that comes from belief in the eternal goodness; that has no message of consolation for the universal sorrow; that does not bring the infinite and eternal goodness to the solution of the mystery of existence. Yet these are descriptions of the religions of the world outside of Christianity. Religion is normal to man, and religion of some kind the nations will have; but only that which is best in itself is best for all men. Doubtless certain parts of

mankind are trained to other ways of thinking and of life, and entertain ideals that render the Christian view of things strange to them, so that it is very difficult to convince them that Christianity is better than that which they possess; but this does not prove that they are right. The fact that pessimism forms the very atmosphere of Indian thought does not prove that the Christian atmosphere of hopefulness would not be better for India. The best is the best, wherever we go. All men need the gospel of Christ.

Observation confirms the conviction that the nations in the world that do not know Christ are destitute of the best, in religion and in life. How much they lack because they are destitute of the Christian gifts, they best know who have lived in non-Christian lands and sympathetically entered into the life around them. Travellers sometimes speak of being impressed by the difference in heritage between the land of their birth and the lands that they are visiting. There is a heritage from the Christian past, so great as to be almost unnoticed, which we estimate at its true value only when we think what it would be to be without it. Christianity has wrought imperfectly everywhere, and yet it is a great contributor to our daily welfare. What would our life be if the



Christian institutions and customs about us, the literary treasures that Christ has influenced, the social standards and spirit that he has introduced, the Christian habits of feeling and action, and the Christian element in our personal heredity, were all blotted out? But to suppose it is to picture the condition in which the most of men are found to-day. The nations of the world are destitute of the entire heritage of Christianity. They have nothing, and know nothing, of its precious gifts and inspiring influences. They do not know that the living God is holy and forever gracious, but inherit out of a past that is untouched by any influence from belief in such a being. We will frankly recognize all the good that is in them, and gladly acknowledge that the common virtues of humanity are everywhere, less or more. Nevertheless by all the evil and all the defect in the life of the world we cannot fail to be affected. Such a condition must surely move our compassion and summon us to help, if we have in us anything that is either Christian or humane.

The call is strengthened by our conviction that Christianity is the appropriate crown for all life that is human. Christ is the true head of humanity, and his revelation brings what all souls need and were created to possess. Human destiny can be fulfilled

only by such fellowship with God as Christ introduces. There is no soul that would not be spiritually richer and forever better for knowing what we know and learning what we experience. Taking the world exactly as we find it, we can fairly say that Christ, with his revelation of God and his gift of life, is what the world most urgently and immediately needs. Both individually and collectively, men are suffering for exactly this. Souls need this, and society needs this also. All men need the truest and the best. All need light and truth, love and goodness, holiness and hope. Therefore, all need to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

This broad statement of the need is enough to justify a missionary motive. Let the specifications of necessity that fall under it be what they may, it is the universal need of the entire grace and gift of Christ that draws us on to missionary effort.

When the modern missionary movement began, conviction concerning the world's need of Christ existed mainly in one form ; or rather, this one form of the conviction surpassed all others in immediate influence. Modern missions were undertaken under the influence of the conviction that all who are des-

titute of Christianity are inevitably destined to endless misery, — the only possible exception being those who die in infancy. This doctrine of the hopelessness of all the heathen seemed to those who held it an irresistible conclusion from Christian premises. It was generally held as certain that salvation is possible only in this life, and only through conscious personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour. From this, if held unconditionally and without modification, it was a necessary conclusion that for those who had never heard of Christ there was no possibility of anything but hopeless ruin at the end of the present life. This belief, which was held throughout the Christian world without any considerable dissent, naturally and properly had great power as a missionary motive. Just as they ought, Christians responded with the gift of the gospel to the appeal of an entire heathen world that was hopelessly and swiftly perishing.

But this belief is not as prevalent and effective as it was a century ago. It has been compared with the facts of life and with other Christian beliefs, especially with the message that we must bear to the heathen if we go to them. It has been perceived that if all who have never heard of Christ are hopelessly doomed, serious questions follow. It follows that God has created the greater part of the human

race incapable of obtaining endless welfare and escaping endless woe, for they have no opportunity of doing the one thing that is indispensable to that end. He has placed the most of his human creatures, thus far, where salvation from sin and doom is beyond their reach. This opens the question of his character, and compels us to inquire whether we can tell men that he is altogether good, — as we must if we are to do effective missionary work. In view of this question, and of other influences that need not be enumerated here, belief in the inevitable doom of all who are born where Christ is not heard of has lost much of its vitality. By many Christians it has been distinctly abandoned, and with many more it has ceased to be influential. This belief does not now contribute that leading motive to missionary effort which it provided when modern missions were undertaken, and it does not seem likely that it will ever return to its former position of power.

Many have felt that the vitality of missions depended upon the retention of this belief, and that to relinquish it was to lose the entire missionary inspiration. Doubt concerning the absolutely universal doom has often been said to “cut the nerve of missions,” and paralyze the energy of the Christian spirit for the work. No one would seriously pros-

ecute missions, it has been said, if doubt of the doom of all the heathen were entertained. It is an important question whether this is true. It is certain that this belief is not present with the Christian people in its former force, and that it shows no signs of regaining its lost influence. In view of the unquestionable retirement of this belief from prominence, it is important that we ascertain whether or not the work of missions is thereby doomed to decline through the loss of its indispensable motive. Is there, or is there not, a valid and available missionary motive apart from belief in the hopeless doom of all who have never heard of Christ? Is there a motive which those who no longer hold the ancient belief may reasonably be expected to honor with enthusiastic consecration?

An answer is suggested by the fact that the weakening of this conviction has not actually quenched interest in missions. Efficient motives certainly seem to have outlived the change concerning the ancient motive. Our own time, in fact, has witnessed two parallel movements. One is the wide diffusion of doubt whether all heathens are necessarily lost forever, and the other is the wide diffusion of interest in missions to the heathen. Side by side with the change in convictions concerning the universal doom of those



who have not heard of Christ, the great modern missionary movement has gone on. It is true that these two movements have not included precisely the same persons in their spheres of influence; but it is equally true that they have not been mutually exclusive, and that very many of the same persons have been affected by both. The two have been simultaneous movements of Christian thought and feeling in the same general community, and they have been so far co-existent that those who felt the one have more or less felt the other also. The result is that many men and women who no longer hold the old belief in the universal doom of the unprivileged have given themselves to missions and are laboring most zealously on the missionary field. Further, it is not true that conversation among the supporters of missions at home would show this change in convictions to have been largely influential in withdrawing contributions from the missionary treasuries. The experience of recent time, which is the only experience that bears upon the subject, does not show that the missionary spirit depends for its existence or its continued vigor upon the retention of the old belief concerning the doom of all who have not heard of Christ. The fact is that the missionary work itself is one of the responsible causes of the decline of that belief.

After what has been said of the gospel, and what it is to God and men, it is scarcely necessary to dwell at length upon the sufficiency of the missionary motive without aid from belief in the doom of all the heathen. Apart from this, the missionary motive is valid and available. If we held that there was no valid motive apart from this belief, we should thereby be compelled to regard the rejecters of the belief as justly exempt from missionary appeals, and under no obligation, with their views, to do anything for missions, — a view that we should be very cautious about maintaining. But the appeal stands secure. The profound spiritual need of the world tells its own story and brings its sufficient argument for help. In the missionary work we partake with God in his great and most delightful work of giving to the world the revelation of himself and the experience of his redeeming love. We also fulfil our own duty and privilege in handing on to the destitute our own precious possession of the best in religion and in life. That the nations of the world, being without the knowledge of Christ, are without the best in religion and in life ; that for want of this knowledge they are unutterably depressed and degraded in the character of their living ; that as men and as peoples they need the spiritual light and life which we know

through Christ ; this, together with God's interest in the matter and call to us to work with him, is a more than sufficient motive. If we withhold ourselves from the work, it will not be for want of sufficient motive, but for want of worthy response.

Many Christians are haunted by the fear that the gospel would not be preached to the heathen if it were believed that they might hereafter have opportunity to hear it and receive it. The motive would be wanting if we were not convinced that the present opportunity was the only one. This is not the place to discuss how the facts may stand with reference to this question of future opportunity to be saved ; but no discussion of Christian missions ought to evade the question whether all true incentive to missionary work would be gone, as some fear that it would, if it were thought that the heathen might hereafter believe on him of whom they have not heard in this life. Does such a belief destroy the missionary motive ?

The missionary motive that has now been presented, such a belief does not destroy or in the least degree weaken. With such a belief, the case would stand much as it stands in the general preaching of the gospel at home. We preach the gospel to the



young, although we have reason to hope that if they will not hear it now we may be allowed to offer it to them again. If we know and love the gospel, the time-element and the number of opportunities count but little in determining whether we shall proclaim it. The motive lies in the gospel itself and its adaptation to the permanent needs of men.

The state of the case may be presented by asking three questions.

What is it to be saved? To be saved, at whatever period, is to be brought out of sinfulness with all that it implies, into moral fellowship with God and all that it implies. Salvation consists in reconciliation with God and moral transformation. It turns, on the human side, upon the choice of the heart and the act of the will. What is essential to it is that choice and action to which Christ in his gospel summons us. If men are ever saved at all, it will be by receiving, in some form, that divine grace which Christ is now proclaiming and has sent us to proclaim. If after a million years a man who is now alive is saved, it will be by doing what Christ calls him to do now.

What is the best time to be saved? Surely now. "Now is the day of salvation," — now the day has come and salvation is possible. The sooner the bet-

ter, for any man. The sooner any man breaks with sin and comes out of his darkness and receives the blessing of the divine salvation, the better. Why should any one be expected, or encouraged, or compelled, to live this life through and go into another without the great experience? Why should evil be allowed a longer time to do its work? Why should God have to wait for the soul, and the soul for God? The golden time is now, because salvation is so needful and so good a gift.

What is the moral character of declining to help a man to salvation because this is not thought to be his last call? What is the moral character and quality of one who says, "I trust you will find the best of gifts some time; I might offer it to you now as well as not, but I expect some one else will do it later, and so I let you go on in your sin and darkness; I have reason to hope that in the course of eternity some messenger of grace will find you and bring you what I might bring to-day?" If we care for the bringing of men to God, we shall wish them to be brought as soon as possible, and be unwilling to leave them to any future. The Christian motive to missions remains in full force as long as it is true that a world of men is living without the light of God and cannot now find it without such help as we

might give. The sight of such a world should surely be sufficient to awaken the Christian compassion and move the Christian helpfulness. Fellowship with God and loyalty to Christ absolutely require that we do the missionary work because of the present need. One who will not join in it, simply does not stand with God.

So, to sum the matter up, the Christian missionary motive is threefold. We are summoned by God in Christ to join with him in doing that work of saving grace toward men which is nearest to his heart, and we cannot refuse: loyalty to God and Christ constrains us. We have received in Christ the best good in life, and are impelled from within to impart it: love to men constrains us. The world needs the gift, and needs it now: and the tremendous want constrains us. The threefold motive is justified by present facts and by eternal realities, and there is nothing that can legitimately deprive it of its force, except the full accomplishment of the end. No special views are needed to enforce the motive. Taking the world exactly as it is and as all sound knowledge finds it, the motive is sufficient. But it is a spiritual motive, and must therefore be spiritually discerned.

### III

#### THE OBJECT IN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

A WORK so great and so honorable as that of Christian missions ought to be most intelligently conducted. Random exertion of energy is worthy neither of human judgment nor of the Christian name, and for every reason there ought to be clear vision of the end that is to be sought. It is not enough to say that the work of missions is intended for the saving of men, for that is language that needs to be defined, and the saving of men may be sought in various ways. This designation of the end in view leaves methods still indeterminate, and a more definite statement is required if the work is to be done with full intelligence. There needs to be such a thing as missionary policy, or administration wisely planned and steadily directed; and in order to this, the end in view must take definite and specific form in the minds of the Christian people. Hence we have to inquire what is the object in Christian missions.

There are two general answers to this question, determined by the view that is entertained of the

purpose and method of God in the world, and the attitude of his grace toward men. Corresponding to these two answers, there are two general theories of missions.

One may be called the theory of heralding. According to this the object in missions is that the gospel may be preached to men, that they may hear it, and that as many of them as believe may be saved. The range of time that is generally contemplated in this view of the matter is short. This view is held most definitely by those who believe that the end of the existing order of things is soon to come, in the second coming of Christ. Only a little time remains before the great transformation: of course, therefore, large and permanent results from the gospel in the present order of things are not to be expected. Life as it now exists is not to be transformed by Christ. A certain part of those who hear the proclamation of the gospel will be saved, and the saving of these from among the mass of mankind is often spoken of as "the gathering-out of the elect." To all hearers of the gospel, however, the opportunity to be saved is given, so far as it can be given through hearing, and it is desirable that it be afforded to as many as possible in the little time that remains. Upon those who hear is thus thrown the responsibility



of their own salvation, so that if now they are lost it is not the fault of God, or of the Christian people. This view of the object in missions would lead missionaries to speak the word of divine grace to as many as possible, not staying long to impart further instruction, or taking pains to provide for permanence in results.

The other theory is the theory of planting. According to this, the object in missions is that Christ may ultimately become known to all mankind, and Christianity may be established as the religion of the whole world. This view can be held, of course, only by those who think there is yet time for permanent results to be obtained in the present order. It is inconsistent with the ordinary second-advent doctrine. If we hold this conception of the object, we seek for Christianity the opportunity to do its age-long work of usefulness. We seek the conversion of individuals to Christ, we train converts in Christian character, we labor to fit new Christians for permanent usefulness, we build up the institutions of Christianity, and we seek to leaven the entire life of the community with Christian influence and quality. In a word, we labor with the purpose that the people and their life shall become and remain thoroughly Christian, and the human race at length be Christianized.

Both these views are held by missionaries, and by Christians at home ; and, on account of the popular confusion of mind concerning the second advent, many persons hold elements from both in unstable combination and with uncertain grasp. Both methods seek the salvation of men, both command sincere consecration, and under the influence of both useful work is done. But both cannot be equally true, for in vital points they contradict each other : and the latter is the truer. The proper object of missionary labor is to introduce Christ to mankind, and plant Christianity as a permanent blessing to the world.

The full vindication of this judgment in favor of the theory of planting would involve the discussion of the question of the second advent of Christ, which cannot here be undertaken. But we may briefly compare the two theories, of heralding and of planting, to see which of them better corresponds to the character of Christianity and the needs of the world.

At the outset, there is one motive, often though not necessarily associated with the theory of heralding, that must be rejected as no Christian motive. It is often held that in this rapid work the gospel is not to be preached mainly in order that it may be believed unto salvation, but rather "for a witness," — which is taken to mean "for a witness against"

the hearers when they meet the judgment of God. The hearing of the gospel marks a turning-point, both in experience and in destiny. When once men have heard the gospel, they will be saved if they believe, and justly condemned if they do not. Only a few will be saved by the missionary preaching: the elect will be gathered out of the mass, and the many will remain indifferent. But the blame of their ruin will be upon themselves, not upon God or the Christian people, and it is to insure this result that the gospel is preached to them for a witness. But this is no Christian truth. Such teaching cannot truly represent the motive of God the Saviour. We must maintain that God acts in good faith in the offers of his grace, or Christianity becomes a delusion. We must preserve our own good faith also in conveying the offer of grace, or our hearers may rise in the judgment to condemn us. If God acts in good faith, he sends the gospel of redeeming grace to men in order that they may be saved by it, not in order that they may be more justly lost because of hearing it. If we are to preach in good faith, we must preach in order to save. Any scheme that involves the preaching of Christ to men with the concealed design of deepening the deserved condemnation of the many who are expected to reject



it, is irreconcilable with the spirit of Christ, and impossible to God. No allowance should be made for any such unchristian motive in our plans for Christian missions, and we must hold no theory of missions that implies it.

The theory of heralding, or rapid proclamation, appeals to many because it seems simple, direct, straightforward. We wish to save men, do we not? Then let us give them the direct, simple, saving message, looking no farther, adding nothing to the essentials. The work that this theory contemplates looks simple also. "Go, preach, move from place to place, tell the story so simply that it will not take long, evangelize rapidly, reach multitudes in little time:" this is attractive. It seems promising, with the promise that accompanies works of faith. The world can be very quickly evangelized, surely, if we thus "attempt great things for God."

Yet if the work is genuine it may not be so simple, or so swift. Of course a herald must stay long enough to make sure that his message is understood. A mere utterance of something unintelligible to the hearer is waste of time and labor, and God cannot intend that missionary work should be made up of such activity as this. But if a man stays where he has spoken till he is sure that his message has even

begun to be understood, he will find his swift work already much delayed. Understanding of such a message comes slowly. Practical questions will arise while he is still expounding it, and his work of proclamation may even pass into that of planting, if he merely stops long enough to see that his proclamation reaches the minds of those who hear.

The fact is that if we are called to introduce the religion of Christ in good faith to new regions, we are called to introduce it in such manner that it may do there its full and characteristic work. We carry Christianity to new peoples in order that they may come to have all that it can give them. But no one can possibly suppose that the saving of the first hearers is all that Christianity can do for a people. That, in fact, is but a very small part of its blessing, for it marks only the entrance of a new power, by which much is yet to be accomplished. Christianity is adapted to enter into life, social as well as personal, gradually transforming what it touches. It cannot do as much for the first hearers of its message as it can for the next generation, born under its influence, and for the tenth generation it can do far more yet. Nowhere has Christianity more than begun to do its proper work for any people in consequence of missions. If we think we can give

Christianity to a people by a rapid proclamation, we do not know what Christianity really is. We often speak of "giving the gospel to the world;" but by this we ought to mean such a giving of the gospel to the world that the world shall have the gospel, and all its blessings; and this cannot be done, except through long lapse of time. The giving of the gospel to Britain, meant for Britain infinitely more than the conversion of the first hearers: it meant the gift of all the British Christian life that has followed, and all that is to follow yet. Christianity cannot do its work for a people without long time to work in. Hence if we are to give it to the world in good faith, we must be planters, not mere hastening heralds. We are introducing a revolutionary power that will require ages for its full work, and we must proceed in the manner that the nature of such a power requires.

The work of planting Christianity for permanence, we may add, requires the exertion of the entire Christian force, and calls into exercise the entire Christian motive and spirit; and this is an argument in favor of it.

If we go into Korea, for example, on the principle and method of planting, it means that we shall sit

down there in Korea, to stay and work, we and our successors, until Korea needs our Christian labors no longer. How long it will take we do not know, except that the time will certainly be very long. We shall not be driven out: if we have to flee, we shall return: we are there, we and our successors, to stay till our work is done. Meanwhile, what is the work that we have in hand? Our work includes all kinds and forms of Christian effort. We must proclaim the gospel to the heathen with all zeal and love and patience, watching that they may understand; gather in the fruits of our labor when they are ready; organize wise and helpful Christian institutions; provide the means of education, and patiently pursue the labor that education implies; help in building up the pure family; give training in all holy and useful life; introduce far-reaching Christian influences to the general society of the land; plan for aid to all useful reforms in the national life; labor to establish a permanent Christian people who will carry on the work that we have begun and be an abiding gift of God to the nation. Men who are engaged in this work need to be zealous in preaching, wise in judgment, far-seeing in counsel, comprehensive in plans, alert in action, versatile in powers, patient in waiting, untiring in love, unlimited in un-

selfishness. There is need of saints, scholars, and statesmen; of evangelists, teachers, and social economists; and of all these full of the mind of Christ.

Compared with this, the idea of missions that proclaim but do not seek to plant seems shallow and evasive. It omits the larger and more exacting works, and leaves unused some of the finest Christian qualities. It encourages the laborer to be satisfied with utterance. It inspires him to speed on from place to place, and even to speed the more swiftly if his labor seems to be in vain. It confines the Christian labor in missions mainly to seed-sowing, which is a far lighter task than cultivation and harvesting. It assumes that sowing is normal when there is no expectation of harvest. It does not call into action the whole Christian, or do justice to the whole of Christianity.

Now the presumption is that Christ will demand, in the missionary service, all that his people have and are. It is to be expected, and hoped, that the work of missions will involve the hardest, most various, and most exacting labor, and will require the utmost love, zeal, wisdom, and patience. The largest, heaviest task, most comprehensive and enduring, is the one that will be laid upon those who enter the fellowship of Christ who died for the



world, and is the one that they ought to seek and welcome. The vast work of planting Christianity thus corresponds far better to the Christian spirit and call than the easier and less exacting work that consists in heralding alone.

What we gain by thus defining the object in missions is this, that we are able to identify the point to which labor should be immediately directed, and the form that labor should take. The definition that has now been given, — that the object is the planting of Christianity for permanence in new regions, — determines the point toward which the great missionary effort should be directed, both in the large and in detail.

More specifically, putting our definition into form for practical application and use, we may say that the object in Christian missions is the raising-up and training of a body of Christian people, who can carry on the Christian work of their own country. This is the first step in planting Christianity, — to make Christians, by the blessing of God on our labors, and to make them in such numbers, and train them to such efficiency, that they can evangelize their countrymen and render Christianity effective in their national life.

It is frequently assumed that the world is to be evangelized throughout by missionaries from Christian lands; but it is not so. It is a serious mistake to suppose that the great nations of the world can be evangelized by foreigners, or that such an undertaking ought to be contemplated in our missionary plans. Any country must be evangelized chiefly by its own people. It is the work of foreign laborers to bring into existence a native evangelizing force, and a body of Christians that can permanently maintain Christianity in the future. That is to say, it is the purpose in missions to raise up a native church. Missions that do not accomplish this are not in the best sense successful, and missionary effort that does not hold this as its ultimate end is not well directed. There can be no substitute for a native church.

Reasons for this estimate of the native church may easily be given. One reason is, that complete evangelization from Christian lands would imply a blending of life between the Christian and non-Christian parts of mankind that cannot occur. The complete evangelization of India, for example, cannot be accomplished by a few missionaries, or by many. It is necessary that the work become universal. The religion must permeate the common



life, and be illustrated and commended in the common industries and the daily experiences of all classes of the people.) But western Christians cannot go and live in India, in such numbers as would be necessary to make it permanently a Christian country. Differences of race, climate, and habits will prevent one part of humanity from pouring itself with transforming abundance and energy into the life of another part.

Another reason is that foreigners are not permanently the best workers, among any people. Differences in mind, language, training, and life disqualify almost all men from being permanent leaders of a race or nationality not their own. If there are exceptions, they are rare. Special representatives of a religion, who may possibly be accused of professionalism, can never completely win a people. Beginnings may well be made under foreign influence, as in the introduction of Christianity they must be; but a great national movement is not to be expected, until enough of the people themselves have been Christianized to form a leading and persuasive force, able to influence the mass of their fellows.

And, yet further, it is not the way of the Christian spirit for foreign influence permanently to dominate the religious life of any people. Foreign influence

may introduce Christianity, but if it were continued too long it would inevitably deprive the native Christian church of its rights of self-direction and development, and reduce it to a position of permanent tutelage and inferiority. Each people is entitled to be itself. It is the Christian way to help the growth of a wholesome independence, and to prepare the native Christianity to stand alone.

These reasons are enough to show that the real object sought in Christian missions is the planting of Christianity for permanency, by raising up a Christian people who shall ultimately take up the work of Christianity in their own country and carry it forward to larger success. But in this statement of the object there is contained a truth of the utmost importance, which is not always present to the minds of those who are interested in missions. It is, that foreign missions must be regarded as temporary in their calling. It must be definitely expected that missions will in the course of time give place to a native church, that will carry on the work of Christianizing as it could never be done by missionaries. It is the duty of foreign missions to render themselves needless. A time will come when the foreigner has done his work, and should leave the future to the native

body, born of God and trained to Christian efficiency. This element in the destiny of missions must never be forgotten. The fact that the work of our missions is a long one must not blind us to its temporary character. For a very long time yet, foreign missions will certainly be needed, and at present no suggestion of the end of the need of them is in sight; but that does not alter the fact that they are essentially temporary. We enter foreign lands for Christ, to stay as long as we are needed there, but no longer. Toward the time of their own needlessness, missions should joyfully and hopefully labor from the first. And it is plain that there is no way to work toward that end, except by building up a native Christian body that can by and by take up the work of Christianity and release the foreign force. This view of missions should be unswervingly held by missionaries on the field and by Christians at home, and toward the day, however remote, of successful departure from the field, all labor from first to last should be intelligently directed.

Concerning this view, that the object in Christian missions is the planting of Christianity, it is now to be said that by it all the various forms of missionary work are recognized, harmonized, and co-ordinated.

Here, at the outset, the work of heralding falls at once into its proper place. Instead of being dishonored by being subordinated to the work of planting, it thus receives its true honor. It stands at the front. Proclamation is the first stage of planting. From this follows the raising-up of the native church. In this comprehensive work it is necessary to translate the Scriptures, to instruct the converts in the essentials of Christianity, to lay foundations for Christian institutions, to train a native ministry, to educate the young who are the hope of the future, to foster general education of the most useful kind, to disseminate general intelligence, to introduce by precept and example Christian ideals of life, personal, domestic, and social, to make the beginnings of a worthy literature, both religious and general, that will be helpful to Christianity, to train leaders in other departments of life than the ministry and the school, to encourage self-support in Christian institutions, to encourage good citizenship, to inspire the Christians at once with a missionary spirit and with a loyal and patriotic zeal for the welfare of their country. With all this the work of evangelization must, of course, be continued, but more and more through native voices. The missionary's chief and abiding work is the developing of Christian character and

effectiveness, working for the future. In this great undertaking, it is evident that all known Christian activities are included in perfect harmony.

This rich group of missionary activities is divided by the nature of its elements into two parts, which are recognized as the two great practical divisions of the missionary work. One is the directly religious work, looking toward conversion to Christ and the developing of Christian character and service, and the other is the educational work, more intellectual in its character, looking toward general, personal, and social development. In the present view of the object in missions, these two main forms of missionary activity are seen in their true relation and harmony.

These two have almost been regarded as rivals. No missionary supposes, indeed, that either evangelization or education can be dispensed with, but judgments differ widely as to their relative importance and position. Some regard the educational work as the best means of approach to human beings, and as an almost indispensable preparation for the religious effort. They look to education to open the mind, to shatter old superstitions, to induce new mental habits, and thus to prepare the way of that gospel which comes as so revolutionary a force. Others feel that the religious appeal of divine grace needs no such



intellectual preparation, but may be trusted to find the heart through its own fitness and power. These regard the need of education rather as a consequence of the success of the religious work. They would seize upon education as a means of training for the Christian community when it has come to exist, but would rely upon preaching, in the broad sense of the term, as the means of bringing it into existence. Some missions have been conducted on one of these principles, and some on the other.

Both methods have been useful, and, corresponding to the prominence given to preaching or to education, there have appeared two types of success. Missions that devote themselves mainly to preaching gather converts in considerable numbers, and are able to point to church membership large in proportion to the labor that has been expended. Education accompanies preaching, but mainly follows it, for the sake of the Christian community and the generation that grows up under its care. This, in general, has been the course of the American Baptist missions, in which emphasis has been steadily laid on preaching. Certain other missions have made large use of the press, the school, the medical college, and the civilizing agencies generally, and have thus sent out a leavening influence through wide regions, affecting



many communities, — an influence very inadequately represented by the number of members in the mission churches. The Presbyterian missions have been conducted largely in this manner. The Baptists, who became interested in missions before they had taken much interest in education, naturally grew into the use of the former method, and have been greatly blessed in it. The Presbyterians, with long traditions of general intelligence and an educated ministry, naturally adopted the latter, and have done great good by it. Probably one method may be better adapted to some countries, and the other to others. Certainly neither should be suspected or condemned by the friends of the other, for both have been vindicated as good and useful methods.

It is plain that what we have called the object of missions is the harmonizing fact, with reference to these two modes of working. Both of these are methods of work for planting Christianity for permanence, and between them, therefore, there is no real rivalry. As to the relations between evangelizing and education in some particular field or at some particular stage of progress, they cannot be judged beforehand, but must be settled in each case according to circumstances. When Christianity comes into close relations with the educated classes

in ancient civilizations, the question will doubtless take some new forms that cannot now be predicted. Thus far, missions have had to do mostly with the uneducated. Certainly no one ought to be satisfied to convert the heathen without educating them, or to educate the heathen without converting them: and yet in various instances these insufficient things may rightly be done. But no great mission has fallen into the error of adopting either of these as a line of policy. Every successful Christian mission must both evangelize and educate, and the two forms of work have no reason to be regarded as rivals. If ever they seem to be such, the true view of the matter has not yet been reached. Each takes its place as a legitimate and indispensable means to the one great end, the planting of Christianity as the permanent religion of the world.

What has been said of education in its relation to the evangelistic work may be said with equal force of the various social betterments that our hearts desire to see accomplished, and to which it is inevitable that some part of our missionary endeavor should be given. In the lands to which missions go, there are found innumerable evils in the structure of society and the conduct of social life, evils deep

and terrible which the application of the spirit of Christ would cure. The Christian home-lands claim no exemption from such social evils, but our own sharing in the common inheritance of sin does not make the horrors of life where Christ is not known less real, or compel us to be silent about them. They confront a missionary as soon as he enters his field, and they confront the Christian world as it contemplates missionary service. There exist all sorts of immoral and destructive practices in personal life. Woman is degraded, infanticide prevails, the family needs uplifting. Cruelty abounds. Truthfulness has not been there to build up a trustworthy order. Slavery fills large parts of the world with uttermost misery. Superstition attends upon ignorance, and holds the multitude in bondage and fear. In all that relates to bodily health and welfare the first principles have yet to be learned. Heavy burdens hang upon society, depressing the individual, as in the system of caste in India. So we might go on. Nowhere do all these evils exist together, but missionaries have not gone in the name of Christ to any country where their hearts have not been saddened by the sight of some of them, existing from far antiquity and wrought into the universal life. It is natural for them to feel, with pity and indignation,

that such evils must be attacked at once, and the people be delivered from the ancient bondage. How can we wait while our human brothers are suffering so?

Yet missionaries do not usually begin with organized assaults upon the social evils that they find. In the course of their life they are sure to do more or less against them, for they cannot possibly do otherwise. Even if a missionary felt that he was there solely to preach the gospel of salvation for the soul, still he would find himself working by direct intention against infanticide, or feet-binding, or corrupting superstitions. A missionary of Jesus Christ is by the nature of his calling a reformer of abuses and a herald of a better common life. His Christian character justifies and requires labor against the manifold ills that confront him. To seek to remove them is a necessary part of his work. Nevertheless it is not his primary work, and missionaries do not usually begin with it. They can do better.

The purpose of missions is the introduction of a revolutionary force. Christ is the healer of the nations, as well as the Saviour of individual men, and missions undertake the bringing-in of his power, to abide and do its long work of blessing. On the theory of mere heralding, in expectation of a speedy

winding-up of human affairs, of course there would be little attention given to social improvement. Feet might still be bound, and slaves lie under the lash, through the few remaining days. There would be no time for deliverance. But on the truer theory of planting, provision is made for brave, long, steady, patient conflict with any and all of the evils that afflict society in heathen lands. The Christian life, when once it has entered among the people, will wage its own battle against them. It is matter of experience that the battle begins as soon as there are Christians: ignorance, superstition, cruelty, and even uncleanness, are recognized as enemies when men are living in Christ. As time passes, there is abundant opportunity to develop direct and special assault upon the ancient evils, and the assault is sure to come. There are generations, centuries, ages, ahead, in which to work out the great strife between Christ and evil. By missions we simply introduce the battle. In this view of missions the endeavor for social betterment takes its place among the natural and necessary endeavors of Christianity, which should be begun at once, and yet which wait for success upon the long operation of the great revolutionary force, the life of God in the soul of man.

One of the strong missionary movements of our day



has taken for its motto, "The evangelization of the world within the present generation," and has set forth to act upon it. Into this brave proposal and resolve there has gone the strength of a great consecration from thousands of hearts, and a multitude of laborers have been impelled by it into actual service. For this high determination to do for the world all that can possibly be done in the name of Christ within the present generation, all Christians must cherish gratitude to God, the inspirer of noble purposes. Happily, this is what the proposal to evangelize the world in short time has practically meant to those who were influenced by it. When we come to inquire what it would be to evangelize the world, the proposal as a definite one eludes us. It might be as difficult to tell when the world has been evangelized as to know when the present generation is past. If it were proposed that within the lifetime of men now living, every community in the world should be visited by messengers of Christ, that might possibly be done. But if it were proposed that every community in the world should hear the gospel sufficiently to be able to understand it for what it is, and accept it intelligently, then certainly the time is far too short for the work. It is quite impossible that within the lifetime of a generation Christ should become



intelligently known by all men. In so short a time even the simplest form of faith in Christ proclaimed cannot be made possible to all. The good news of Christ must be made somewhat plain to the minds of men, and be loved into their hearts, before it can become plain to all, and that is a work of time.

As a matter of fact, it appears more and more that there is no such thing as evangelizing the world, apart from the first stages of the endeavor to make Christianity the permanent religion of the world. To evangelize is to introduce the transforming power, which is to remain and do its work. That can be done within the present generation, if God's children are ready, to an extent that cannot be measured beforehand. It can be very broadly done. But it is not a work that can be finished at the passing of some generation, or at any other date, for by its very nature it moves right on into the permanent work of the long future.

On this principle it comes to pass that those who conduct their work under the mistaken expectation of a speedy end do not labor in vain, but are building better than they know. The long future stretches out before them though they do not see it, and into it the fruits of their labor will go, there to abide for everlasting good. As years pass, those who thought

they were only heralding the gospel will find themselves gladly planting Christianity before they are aware, and doubtless many of them will live to see long blessing on what they thought was destined to be short **toil**.

## IV

### THE FIELD OF MISSIONS

THE field of Christian missions is the world of mankind. Christ came to all that is human, and so Christianity is universal in its scope; and the need is universal. Hence, wherever there is any part of mankind that has not yet been blessed in Christ, there is a proper field for missionary work.

To describe the field in any comprehensive manner is, of course, impossible. All that will be attempted at present, is to indicate some of the types of missionary field that we discover. The various parts of humanity present fields that differ widely among themselves, but these may be grouped with general correctness into a few great classes.

Although the present study is concerned mainly with foreign missions, a few words may be given to the field of home missions, in America. Home missionary work is necessary, and it is the duty of American Christians to carry it on, for at least three strong reasons. Here are human beings to be blessed

with the gifts of the gospel of Christ; the moral and religious uplifting of these human beings is essential to the purity and stability of the nation; and the mission of our country to the world cannot be fulfilled without the presence here of a strong and well-trained Christian people. These reasons are all truly Christian in their character, and have a perpetual power of legitimate appeal to the Christian people of America.

The main forms of American home-missionary work are these:—

*a.* Pioneering, or carrying the Christian message and founding Christian institutions as life advances into new regions. From the beginning of our national history till now, new communities have constantly been springing up, and the process is not yet at an end, though it will never again be as rapid as heretofore. In these new communities home missions, sent out from the older regions, have preached the gospel, established churches, provided pastoral care, and helped the churches to live till they were able to conduct their own work. Independence does not come at once, and the helpful service often needs to be continued after the period of pioneering is past. The fruits of such labor are beyond measuring. There is no State, and no large city, west of

the Atlantic coast, in which the Christian beginnings have not been fostered by home-missionary effort.

*b.* Helping the weak in old positions. It often happens that in old communities the Christian interest has become feeble through emigration and other causes, so that help from without is needed for the maintenance of religious institutions. In regions where the rural population is declining, such assistance is often required. Help is thus rendered not merely to the weak local interest, but also to the general life of the country; since out from the declining rural communities there is constantly flowing a stream of young life, to fill the cities and larger towns; and this young life can best be influenced on the religious side in its early home. This kind of labor often seems discouraging, and yet, on the whole, it has yielded much good fruit.

*c.* City evangelization. Cities are steadily becoming a greater element in our national life, and the problems of society, morality, and religion in our cities are becoming more complex and difficult, and at the same time more urgent in their importance. The larger part of the organized Christian work that is done in our great cities needs now to bear more or less the character of missionary work. Such work takes many forms that in the country are practically

unknown. This element in Christian service is destined to increase still more, both relatively and absolutely, in the future, if our cities are to be Christianized at all. Along with the work of direct evangelization, there must necessarily go great endeavors that may easily be called merely humanitarian; and Christian people must learn to look upon such works not only without disapproval or disparagement, but as indispensable means of fulfilling the will of Christ.

*d.* The evangelizing of foreign populations. In cities and in the country we have great masses of people who have come from other lands. Many of these speak their own languages and retain their own customs, so that foreign life exists among us. To lead these peoples to a vital Christianity, and thus at once to enrich their life and help to make them a useful part of the nation, is one of the great tasks of the missionary spirit in America. Questions of method in this field are often especially difficult, and there is no work that requires greater wisdom and patience.

*e.* The uplifting of the American Indians, and of the African race in America. The original inhabitants of our country, whom we have often treated most unjustly, have a strong claim upon us for all the good that we can do them now. The African



race, long enslaved among us, has been made a part of the nation, but is suffering in every way from the long experience of slavery, and from dangers unforeseen in the new conditions of political enfranchisement. We owe to it all that we can give. Justice, love, and self-protection all demand the general improvement and uplifting of the Negroes. Educational, moral and religious help of every kind must be given by American Christians to this needy part of our own people, with the intent that they may become able to help themselves and to bless the nation of which they form a part.

The home-missionary work thus slightly sketched is a work of great magnitude and of pressing importance, and there are never lacking those who maintain that it is work enough for American Christians. With all this upon our hands, they say, why should we be called to do anything for the distant nations of mankind? Until the home work is accomplished, we have no duty beyond.

It is not noticed that such objectors are sure to be the persons who are doing the most for the work at home. On the contrary, it is generally the fact that those who care enough about either work to do something for it, are interested in both. There are excep-

tions, but this is the rule. So it ought to be: for while it is true that our country has great needs, it is also true that our country contains an unparalleled amount of missionary force. There is no land on earth that contains so large an amount of free, movable, available Christian force as the United States of America. If this land, thus supplied, is so needy, what shall we say of those far greater lands in which, almost until yesterday, there existed absolutely no Christian life or power at all, and where Christianity to-day has done almost nothing? and what shall we say of the lands in which no Christian beginning has been made? And if it is still said that the whole of this Christian force should be turned to the work that lies at hand, and our eyes should not be lifted up to look upon the needs that are beyond, the answer is that Christianity, the religion of God's generosity, is the religion of world-wide generosity among men. It knows no limits while the need of it exists. Generosity is essential to it. It is a religion that cannot be really strengthened at home by declining to extend its blessings abroad. Indifference to the great world with its overwhelming needs cannot strengthen the local Christian interest. It is only by self-forgetful love and service, bearing others' burdens, that this religion grows strong. It is a complete

misunderstanding of Christianity to suppose that some Christian church or country, by concentrating its attention and labors upon itself, can so accumulate power as to be able to turn in full vigor to do its Christian work for others at some later date. It was said long ago that Christianity is a commodity of which the more we export the more we have at home. It is equally true that the less we export, the less we may find at home. The true vitality of our religion will be found in world-wide work. Hence the need at home, urgent as it is, must not be allowed to countermand the law of Christ, that we make disciples of all the nations.

Returning now to foreign missions, we may consider the fields in which they must be conducted. In seeking to make disciples of all the nations, we encounter men of all grades of civilization, and all kinds of religion. Christianity has not yet entered all parts of the world, but it has gone far toward meeting all the general varieties of human kind and human institutions. Three types or varieties of men may be mentioned, as constituting three types or classes of fields for missions.

*a.* Peoples of ancient civilization and developed religion. To such peoples the thought of Christen-

dom naturally turns with greatest interest, since they are the great and prominent peoples of the non-Christian world. With them the Christian nations have most to do, and the way of approach to them is opened most directly by commerce and acquaintance. Moreover, it seems plain that labor expended upon the great peoples has largest promise of usefulness in the future of the world. Such fields offer the strategic points. A people that has a long past has prospect of a significant future. Such fields offer larger returns than others.

The first land to become prominent under the attention of the modern missionary spirit was India; for India was closely related to Britain, in which the modern movement became strong. India has great variety of races and peoples, but in the dominant races of that country there is a civilization thousands of years old, accompanied by religious institutions equally venerable in age. The ancient religion of India, represented now by Hinduism, had already grown old before Buddhism, five centuries older than Christianity, sprang out of it. Thus, in India, Christianity comes into contact with ancient, firm, and abiding institutions, both in civilization and in religion, and encounters all the conservatism that belongs to such institutions. In China, the existing civiliza-

tion is probably even older than in India. There Confucius, at about the time of the rise of Buddhism, gave new form to a religion that was already ancient, a form that it still retains. There the conservative instinct is as strong as anywhere among men, and society is thoroughly organized for permanence. The strength of settled institutions and the impulse of conservatism in such a land is something of which men in such a country as ours can have but slight conception. The startling events of the year 1900 in China suggest great and unpredictable changes in the future, but probably they cannot be understood to indicate that the vast solid mass is ready for swift transformation. When we come to Japan, we meet a civilization far less ancient than that of China, and yet containing some of the same elements of conservatism, though strangely modified by mixture of the modern spirit. Here the youngest of the nations of the ancient type has been touched by the modern ambition and awakened to a modern interest in life, so that Christianity finds it a field of unique character, offering peculiar advantages and presenting peculiar difficulties.

These three lands, the great lands of the Orient, are possessors of ancient civilization and developed religion, and in them missionary work encounters



the solid conservatism of ages, save as in Japan the new world has brought in the breath of its stirring life.

b. Low peoples, with religions of low grade. Within the countries already mentioned these are found. In India there are multitudes of hill-tribes, which are remnants of ancient populations, driven ages ago to the high regions of the interior by the conquering invaders who took possession of the plains and valleys. These primitive peoples all possess their ancient institutions and religion, but their life is what we call uncivilized, and their religions are crude and coarse. When we look beyond the lands where civilization has driven savagery to the mountains, we see great countries of which savagery still possesses the whole. The sympathetic attention of Christian people was long ago directed to the savages of the islands of the southern Pacific Ocean, of whom, a century ago and less, the Hawaiians were a sample. Throughout Australasia there are communities of men in a similar state, with institutions of low order and religions of low grade. Among these peoples self-sacrificing work of a high order has been performed, and has yielded good results. In the great continent of Africa there are scores of millions in the same general condition, some higher and some lower



in human grade, just beginning to be known to the civilized world. Doubtless for centuries yet there will be a call for Christianity to offer its help in the renewing and elevation of men who are near the lowest grade of human life.

Now and then, with some degree of regularity, there arises some one to maintain that such labor is vainly spent, if not wickedly wasted. Why, they ask, should any labor at all be spent on a waning race like the Hawaiians, when the whole might be concentrated on a permanent race that has a future, like the Chinese? Why touch non-strategic points at all? Does not wisdom direct us to place our labor where it will bring forth fruit for the long future? It is very true that the fields of strategic promise should be most considered. So says wisdom. But it is equally true that the Christian wisdom knows the divine preciousness of the Christian compassion, and has no harsh words to utter when the Christlike heart responds to the appeal of the poorest and lowest of all men. Alexander Duff made good investment of his life in India, but his countryman Paton invested his life well also in the New Hebrides.

*c.* Peoples possessed of degenerate faiths, or of faiths that have been arrested in their development. Large parts of the earth are occupied by religions that

have not risen to their full destiny, or have declined from their best estate. Islam, the religion of Mohammed, may fairly be counted as a religion in which the legitimate spiritual development has been arrested. When it arose, in the sixth Christian century, it was an advance upon the ancient religion of Arabia, which it absorbed and superseded. It has often been called a degenerate Judaism, and a degenerate Christianity. These names imply too much by way of influence from Judaism and Christianity in its origin; but it may properly be called a degenerate, or else an arrested and undeveloped, monotheism. It holds immovably to belief in one God, but though it nominally admits Jesus among its prophets, the revelation of God in Christ it has never apprehended. It has thus declined a holy and tender monotheism, full of help to the soul, in favor of a monotheism that is hard and fatalistic, unable to raise humanity to its proper and worthy height.

Judaism is another faith that is suffering from arrest in its development. It is a religion that has resisted its destiny. It has persisted in being what it was, instead of allowing itself to be absorbed in its own fulfilment. It has thus stopped in the path of progress, and stood still for ages. Most naturally, even apart from the memory and the present experi-

ence of wrongs endured at the hands of Christians, it is strongly opposed to that Christianity in which it ought to have lost its life to find it again. In some modern expressions of Judaism the sweetness and power of genuine religion appear; yet Judaism, as a whole, has been arrested in its life.

There are various Christian churches in which the more spiritual quality of Christianity has, in great measure, been lost for the people, and out of which we cannot but feel it to be a brotherly service to call men to a better faith and life. In the lands of the Greek church there is found among the common people a deeply ignorant faith, attended by devoutness indeed, but profoundly lacking in Christian intelligence, and not productive of the spiritual liberty that belongs to the children of God. The same is true of large parts of the people in Roman Catholic countries. In Mexico, and in many parts of South America, there has been a peculiar blending of the religion of the Roman Catholic invaders, not too devout or intelligent, with the religious ideas and practices of the original native races; and the result is a most lifeless and degenerate nominal Christianity. Such inferior forms of Christianity are always marked by much externalism and formalism. It is true that a fervent faith is often found within them, and,

thank God, we know that souls may there exercise the faith that is acceptable, and be made alive in Christ. Yet it is by a true fraternal impulse of Christlike love that Christians of high experience are often led to call men out of them to a more direct and simple confidence in the Saviour God.

This very rapid view of the world shows us mission-fields where both civilization and religion are ancient, established, and conservative, fields in which human life is rudimentary and crude, and fields in which some religion has either declined from its best estate or been somehow prevented from attaining to it.

How do these classes of fields rank among themselves, with respect to fruitfulness under missionary labor? The answer to this question appears to be that thus far the most fruitful fields have been among the lower classes of humanity, the next have been where the old religions and civilizations exist, and the least fruitful have been the fields where religions of arrested development hold sway.

Certainly the largest successes have thus far been obtained either in fields of the second group, where all the conditions of life and religion are of the lower order, or among the lower classes of men who are living under the sway of the great and ancient relig-

ions. One reason for this undoubtedly is that the most simple-minded are in general the most open-minded. Those who have the least to throw away before they can receive a simple and spiritual faith, are the ones to whom Christ appeals most successfully. The old established religions resist the appeal of a new faith by the pride of antiquity and the gathered certainty and conservatism of ages. Ingrained mental habit, especially when it has to do with sacred things, is a tremendous power for the maintaining of that which exists. This power is present in savages with their low forms of religion, but it is far more firmly entrenched in those venerable systems of thought and life which have been consecrated by ages of custom and have enlisted the service of national and spiritual pride.

Thus in India, the educated and ruling classes have been led to the Christian faith only in individual instances, never in large groups; but the poor and ignorant, as, for example, in many of the hill-tribes, have yielded much larger fruit from missionary labor. In Burma, the Burmese, who were Buddhists, have responded but very slowly to the gospel; while the Karens, who were a bright people comparatively without religion, responded quickly and joyfully. In China, the intelligent classes have as yet come to



know little or nothing of Christianity in its religious meaning; but among the common people, with their hard life and heavy burdens, the transforming and uplifting power of Christ has slowly but surely entered into its welcome. In Japan, where the spirit of change was already abroad when the missionaries entered, the intelligent classes have been more open-minded toward Christianity, although the later indications go to show that their responsiveness was more superficial than it seemed. In all countries, however, there has been more or less of evidence that Christianity was able to lay a convincing hold upon intelligent minds, and that it was not in vain to hope for good success among the more thoughtful.

It has sometimes been alleged that the converts from low classes constituted poor fruit for Christianity, in proportion to their lowness. But the charge is on the whole untrue. No fruit of Christianity anywhere is perfect, and it is unavoidable that much desirable quality should be lacking in converts from a primitive and undeveloped world. We might easily expect too much from men whose life has been poor in higher thoughts and bare of the graces. But in respect of vitality and power, simplicity and consecration, and the exhibition of the spirit of Jesus in common life, the body of converts from the ranks of



lower humanity has given abundant proof of the divine reality of the work. In Asia, Africa, and the islands, it has been triumphantly shown that the message of divine grace in Christ can win its victories without depending upon advance movements of civilization to prepare the way. It does not reject or despise such preparations as civilization may make, but neither does it hold them indispensable.

No large movement has occurred from any of the formalized Christian churches, under the influence of Protestant missions. Probably the Roman Catholic church, taking the world together, does not yield more converts to Protestantism than it draws from it. The Greek church is thus far practically unaffected. Great numbers of individuals have indeed come out, especially from Romanism, and found in the direct access to God to which a simpler faith introduced them a gift unspeakably precious. The Greek and Roman churches appeal to elements that are deeply seated in human nature, and probably for a long time to come they will be powerful in the world. But the general progress of the human mind leads to a justifiable dissatisfaction with them, and if intelligence moves on to its proper greatness, and religion to its proper simplicity, the day will come when their sway is no longer tolerable.

From Judaism, Christianity has drawn many individual converts, but the mass is unmoved. From Mohammedanism very few converts have been made. Islam, in fact, presents to Christianity the most unmoved and solid front that it encounters anywhere. This is due in part to the intensity of the Mohammedan temper, fostered by the character of the religion. It is partly due also to the deep antagonism that resulted from the relations between the two religions in the Middle Ages, when the Christian world hurled itself against the Mohammedan world in the wars of the Crusades, with no just cause whatever so far as the East could see. It is a fact also that Islam believes itself to hold all in Christianity that is worth holding. Still further, on the border-land between the east and the west Islam has to do with samples of Christianity that are far from exhibiting the true Christian character and significance. And yet again, in meeting Jews and Moslems, Christianity enters the field of that mysterious and deadly power, race-antagonism, the force of which still remains tremendous.

The power of Christianity to win masses of men away from Mohammedanism is yet to be proved; but failure to win Moslems thus far does not show that success will always be impossible. From the nature

of the relations between the two faiths, it seems likely that this will be one of the later tests of power, brought on only after considerable time has passed. Moreover, it will be perhaps the most decisive of all tests of power, in which the Christian world is certain to fail unless it has learned well the lesson of Christ. The radical difference between Mohammedanism and Christianity relates to the character of God and the relation in which he stands to men. Islam preaches a God whose will is fate, and who does not come into intimate spiritual relations with mankind. Christianity proclaims a God whose will is holy love, who does come into intimate spiritual relations with men, to transform them into the likeness of his own character. Christianity can conquer Islam only when its adherents show forth the character which their religion promises. It is doubtful whether the Christian world is yet good enough to preach successfully to Moslems that better God whom Christ reveals. Christians will have to learn their own God better, and weave the lesson of his character into their own lives both private and public, before they will be ready to do successful missionary work in the Mohammedan world. It is true that the same necessity exists everywhere; but in other fields Christianity has in its monotheism an advantage that

it does not possess in its contest with Islam. That contest must finally be waged on the ground of character alone.

It is commonly said that the world is open to Christian missions, and in general it is true. In our time the various parts of the globe are in close communication with one another, governments stand in mutual relations, and commerce is all-embracing. The unvisited regions are but few. Men go everywhere for discovery or gain, and men can go everywhere to do good. Not without self-denial indeed, and not without danger, can the work be done, and yet in general the field is open. That the field will remain open, however, is not so certain. We are passing from the nineteenth century to the twentieth amid threatening signs in this respect. Already have our missionaries been driven out of China, while some, unable to escape, have laid down their lives there. Race-antagonisms are asserting themselves afresh, and at the same time it is possible that parts of the mission-field, open to missions when under heathen government, may fall under the sway of European powers that will have no welcome for missionaries of the Protestant class, to say the least. Great parts of the field, however, will undoubtedly remain open, and

it may be that the discouraging signs will fail. At present there is great opportunity for missionary work, and therefore great responsibility with respect to it. Whether by opportunity or by reverses, the faith of the church regarding the extension of the Christian truth and life is destined to be tested to the utmost in the immediate future. The Christian people should be awake to what is thus upon them, and prepare to meet the test.

## V

### CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS

MISSIONARY Christianity encounters the religions of the world. These are of many kinds, from low fetishisms to highly-organized systems, some of them ages older than Christianity. The question inevitably arises, How is Christianity related to the other religions? and what attitude toward them should its missionary representatives take? The question is of the first importance, both theoretically and practically. Missionaries need clear views of it, as well as right feeling upon it, and so do the Christian people at home; for very much, both in theory and in practice, will depend upon the answer to it that is accepted.

On this subject we must inquire what the non-Christian religions properly are and how we ought to think of them; what Christianity proposes with regard to them; and what position ought practically to be taken toward them in actual missionary work.

In the first place, then, How should we think of the non-Christian religions? What are they? The first



answer to this question is, that the religions of the world are expressions of the religious nature of man.

Of this there is no need of offering proof. Religion, or the life of worship, trust and obedience toward the unseen powers, is natural to man, and therefore it is that man has his religions. All of them, the higher and the lower alike, have come into existence because man must have such an element in his life. They correspond to the responsible and worshipping heart of humanity, as it was at the time and place of their arising. Notwithstanding all their faults, they do give expression to the religious feeling in man, and turn his spirit outward from himself toward the heavens. Though we see how terribly they fall short of fulfilling the human need, we should not think of them with contempt, or suppose that they have been of no use. Even a very imperfect expression of the religious nature of man is better than none. In his various religions, in spite of their sad defects, man has found a partial expression for this essential element in himself.

In the address of Paul at Athens there are some extremely suggestive hints that may help us in estimating the value of the religions of the world. "What therefore ye worship in ignorance," he said to

his hearers, "this set I forth unto you." "You are worshipping an unknown God; I will show you the God you are reaching after though you do not know him." The outreaching of their worshipping hearts Paul regarded as an outreaching after God, even though it did not intelligently find him so as to know him as he is. If this hint of Paul is followed, it appears possible for the living God to regard himself as really though ignorantly addressed, in the praying of men who do not know him as he is, and to do them good in proportion to their possibilities, in answer to their prayer. This must be true. In what other light, indeed, can we conceive the good God as regarding the eager and passionate praying that has risen in all ages from his own creatures, who did not yet know the Being who was above them? And in the same address Paul affirms that God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him." According to this, the providential order for the life of men has been arranged by God with reference to their seeking him and finding him. He planned to be sought and found by men, even if they were men who could only grope after him in the

darkness. Paul adds that God is not far from any one, since "in him we live, and move, and have our being," and since "we are his offspring." He desires men to seek him, even when their seeking can be nothing better than groping in the dark; and even by such seeking he must consider it possible for him in some measure to be found. Thus the knowledge of Christ had evidently borne it in upon the heart of Paul that God intends to be found, in some sense, by men who have no clear knowledge of him, and has designed the conditions of their life with reference to their finding him.

Following the spirit of this teaching, we are safe in concluding that the various religions that express the religious nature of man have their place in the providence of God. They came naturally to exist, the outgrowth of conditions, in the world that he had made and over which he was exerting providential care. This conclusion agrees in spirit with Paul's other teaching in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, to the effect that men who have no special revelation have in nature such light that they may know the true God if they desire it. It agrees also with the teaching in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, about "the true light that lighteth every man." This light, which is identified with the

Word, shines in the darkness, it is affirmed, but the darkness does not apprehend it, — or else, as some translate, the darkness does not overcome it, or extinguish it. The point is that the light does shine in the darkness. This “true light” is manifested in the native moral judgment and religious aspiration of man; perhaps also in the entrance of higher aims to life, unexplained advances whether great or small in morals and religion, helps to better living, ministered by the unseen Spirit. If it is true that there is such a “light,” then God has never forsaken any part of his human world, and the religions of mankind may well be regarded as having their place in his providence. This agrees well with the spirit of his gospel, which makes known a God concerning whom it is inevitable that sooner or later we should think such thoughts of largeness and fidelity to his creation. The God and Father of Jesus Christ is a God who cares for that which he has made, and when we know him in Christ we instinctively feel that he cannot have left himself wholly without a witness among his creatures anywhere or in any period of their career.

But another statement of widely different tone must be added. The religions of the world, though they are expressions of the religious nature of man,

are also, as they now exist, encumbrances upon the religious nature of man.

As for the low religions, fetishistic and animistic, they may once have been upward calls though they called but a little way upward; but they are not such now. They rule by terror, and maintain a tyranny over the religious powers of those who live under them. The unseen powers that are worshipped are usually regarded as unfriendly, and dreaded for the harm that they can do. Hence the perpetual deprecations and propitiations. Ages of such feeling and practice have produced a habitual fearfulness, and a complete inability to shake off the incubus of dread. The religious instinct is stopped from going higher, without being really satisfied, and the religion that holds it thus in hard constraint is rather an encumbrance than an inspiration and a comfort.

The higher religions would seem able to do more for the satisfaction of the religious nature. Some of them have a profound philosophy, and have raised certain noble souls to a fervent devotion. Some of them contain lofty thoughts and worthy prayers, uttered and recorded long ago by choice spirits. Yet in sad reality the higher religions rank with the lower, as encumbrances upon the religious nature of mankind. How true this is, and how it comes to pass, a



glance at some facts in the great historic religions will suffice to show.

In Confucianism the religious nature of man is almost left out of the account. Among the common people, the highest satisfaction that it receives is provided in the worshipping of ancestors. The field of religion is occupied almost wholly by ethics, and by ethics moving on the plane of human relations. The whole Confucian system is exactly a burden or encumbrance upon the religious nature, preventing it from coming to its due development. Religion suffers from being subordinated to ethics. In Buddhism, and in Hinduism too, the religious nature has a different weight to bear. A pessimistic philosophy suppresses it. The doctrine of universal and dominant evil, so great and deep as to make all existence a curse to those who suffer it, is too much for religious life and feeling to thrive under, and religion dies down discouraged, as it must where there is no hope. Religion suffers from being complicated with a philosophy of despair. In Hinduism, as in the Baal-worship that the Hebrews knew, the religious nature is fast wrought in with the non-moral nature-powers and the animal element in man, and the combination is commemorated in lustful and degrading rites. When religion comes to expression on the side of feel-



ing, its outlet is found in what is gross and cruel, and bloodshed and lust come to be elements in the ceremonial. Thus the religious nature is degraded, and religion suffers from alliance with nature-powers and animal impulses. In Mohammedanism the religious nature finds yet another burden. Here there is one God, who is declared to be the holy and merciful, but he is altogether transcendent, and not accessible to any real fellowship of man. His will is man's guide, but only from above and afar, to be obeyed only in absolute submission, not in filial life and love. So the religious nature finds no warm exercise, and is set free only to works of obedient routine or else of fanatical fervor. Religion suffers from the chill of bare sovereignty. Thus in one of the great religions the religious nature of man is imprisoned in human ethics; in another, it is depressed by a dark philosophy; in another, it is corrupted by coarse feeling; in another, it is deadened by want of the warmth of divine love. In other words, in Confucianism where the religious movement is ethical, the ethics become human and religion is lost. In Buddhism, where it is philosophical, the philosophy becomes pessimistic, and religion dies out. In Hinduism, where it is emotional, the emotion becomes degrading, and religion is defiled. In Mohammedanism, where it is doc-

trinal, the doctrine becomes cold and lifeless, and religion is atrophied. Everywhere the great historic religions of the world have come to be encumbrances upon the religious nature of man. Everywhere it is the religious nature that suffers under their influence. Nowhere is that nature permitted to rise to its true proportions and develop its rightful worth.

The reasons why the religions of the world are encumbrances upon the religious nature of man might be variously stated, but they all centre in one. The religions all lack the one thing needful if religion is to do its beneficent work for men. There is no one of them that knows a personal God, of inspiring character, so related to men that they can have personal relations with him. The only monotheistic religion among them is Islam, and its God is transcendent and not immanent, a sovereign will and not a self-manifesting friend. A personal God possessing a moral character and offering himself in personal relations to men is known to Christianity alone. So far as Judaism is an exception, it is such because it partakes of a common stock with Christianity, and is part and parcel of that revelation of the living God which is the light of the world. Among the great religions, the doctrine of a good and helpful God is peculiar to the religion of Jesus Christ.

Because there is no knowledge of such a God it comes to pass that in general the non-Christian religions are worships of power, rather than of goodness. The unseen beings that are addressed in worship are regarded chiefly as mighty, and therefore able to do great good or harm to men. The impulse to worship power for the sake of advantage is indeed a first impulse of mankind, characteristic always of early stages of humanity; for the reality of power is perceived before it is possible for character to be highly appreciated, and the conciliation of power easily appears to be a necessity. This tendency to worship power, and to deprecate, propitiate and beg off in the dreaded presence of almightiness, is only too common still among Christians, but it is immeasurably more characteristic of the other religions. Moreover, Christianity has the means of curing it, while they have not. Worship of power, however, is demoralizing. When unseen beings are worshipped chiefly because of the good or harm that their power enables them to do, the tendency to take a slavish and cringing attitude before them is almost irresistible, and a worthy uplifting of the soul in spiritual adoration can hardly occur. Not until worship takes on the character of sincere adoration of the perfect divine goodness, and humble communion with the good

God, does religion obtain its true character and come to its rightful place as the inspiration of the worthiest life. In so far as the religions of the world fail to discern the perfect character in God, and lead to the worship of power rather than of goodness, they lie as a heavy encumbrance upon the religious nature of man. In so far as Christianity is able to bring in the revelation of the perfect God and lead men to adore his goodness while they trust his power, Christianity is what the whole world needs.

Our second question is, What does Christianity as a missionary religion propose, with regard to the religions that exist in the world? The answer to this question is, that Christianity proposes to win men away from the other religions by bringing them something better, and to take the place of the other religions in the world.

The attitude of the religion that bears the name of Jesus Christ is not one of compromise, but one of conflict and of conquest. It proposes to displace the other religions. The claim of Jeremiah is the claim of Christianity, — "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens." The survival of the creator, joyfully foreseen, is the ground

of its confidence and its endeavor. Christianity thus undertakes a long and laborious campaign, in which it must experience various fortunes and learn patience from trials and delays; but the true state of the case must not be forgotten, namely, that Christianity sets out for victory. The intention to conquer is characteristic of the gospel. This was the aim of its youth when it went forth among the religions that then surrounded it, and with this aim it must enter any field in which old religions are encumbering the religious nature of man. It cannot conquer except in love, but in love it intends to conquer. It means to fill the world.

That Christianity ought to hold such an aim as this is denied, of course, by that indifferentism, mentioned in an earlier chapter, which thinks one religion about as good as another, and imagines that each race already has the religion that on the whole is the best for it. But this indifferentism, which would stop Christian missions altogether if it had its way, is grounded in ignorance of what Christianity is, in comparison with the religions of the world. If Christians entertain it, it is because they do not know what they have in Christ.

That Christianity aims to displace the other religions and conquer the world through missions is



denied also by those who entertain the second-advent view of the gospel, which expects only a short work for missions, and small fruit from them. But it is worthy of notice that any missionary work, great or small, whatever be its relation to the long sweep of time, does seek to displace and supersede other religions, at least in individual hearts and lives. In all such labor Christianity does set itself in contrast to the other religions, seek to loosen their hold upon men, and offer its own blessings in place of their imperfections and disappointments. If the work were to continue but a year, this would be its nature. What is here asserted is simply that this which is the immediate object in missions is also the final object. Christianity sets out in good faith to take the place of something else, or there would be no missions. The aim is but one, and what we seek at the beginning is what we seek throughout the work and even to the end.

Our third question is the question of every-day work. What position ought practically to be taken and maintained in missions, in relation to the other religions? These religions are expressions of the religious nature of man and yet are encumbrances upon it, and Christianity with its knowledge and



experience of God in Christ sets out to dispossess them among mankind and take their place. Four points may be mentioned, by way of indicating the attitude toward the other religions that ought to be held in Christian missionary work.

*a.* There should be a reasonable effort to understand the other religions.

This ought to need no proof. Any missionary is liable any day to encounter a keen and well-informed opponent among the men whom he is seeking to win; and he cannot hope to disarm such an opponent, not to speak of winning him over, without some understanding of what he holds already. Yet the main point is not that Christianity is to be introduced and commended by argument: it is rather that one who desires to win another to a new and better faith will find it necessary to enter somewhat into the spirit of the religion that he would influence the other to abandon. There is need of sympathetic approach, which implies some insight into the state of the other's mind. In no country is ignorance of an opponent's position a help to influence, and nowhere is unsympathetic blankness concerning another's thought anything but a barrier between souls. Indeed, how shall we defend ourselves from the charge of impertinence

and trifling with sacred things if we go and try to win men away from an ancient religion, without an honest endeavor to understand that religion as it really is?

This means, practically, that some study of the particular religion that a missionary is to deal with should be made by him before he enters upon the work. A man who is going to India should learn something, as systematically and justly as possible, about the religions of India. One who is going to China should do the same with the religions of China. This has not always been done, and men have been known to go out in deep ignorance of what they were to meet. Yet the statement seems too reasonable to admit of doubt.

Concerning this preparatory study it may perhaps be said by way of objection, that only a very imperfect knowledge can thus be obtained. The study of Buddhism, for example, in America will give only a one-sided conception of it, and may easily yield a too favorable opinion. One may learn something of its history and philosophy, it may be said, but the real Buddhism itself cannot be known till one sees it in actual life, in a people who believe in it. Not till then can a man know its defects, though beforehand and from afar he may learn only too well its strong points.

There is truth in this objection, but nevertheless there is need of exactly such preparatory knowledge. There are two ways of learning about a religion that is not one's own, — through information and through observation, — and both are necessary. If we were speaking of Christianity as we are of other religions, we should certainly say that in all fairness it must be studied as well as observed. One who sought to know it by living in America or Britain, without studying its scriptures, its history and its most characteristic writings, would be destined to think he understood it when he did not. We ought to treat Buddhism as fairly as we would demand that another should treat Christianity. The great religions of the world cannot be justly known without being studied, and missionaries ought to study them.

Moreover, there are many things that tend to make it difficult for a missionary to understand a religion well by observing it on the field. A foreigner, beginning his observations in ignorance of the language and customs of the people, is necessarily at a great disadvantage in his efforts to understand a religion. Watching religious acts without the power to converse about them is the worst possible introduction to knowledge of their meaning; but this is the foreigner's invariable approach. His disadvantage is

all the greater if he looks upon the religion as something that must be destroyed, and that he must take part in destroying. Such an observer is certain to miss much of the meaning of things as it appeals to the men who are influenced by the religion, and to find no sense whatever in much that to them is significant. To a foreigner, and especially to the mind of a missionary, a religion shows its weak side; and there is no certainty that observation, unless it be long and unusually sympathetic, will afford a comprehensive and well-balanced knowledge. A missionary must deeply feel the inferiority of the religion that he seeks to displace by the one that is better, and may be tempted to despise it: but to despise it is neither Christian nor wise. He may easily be content with knowing what constitutes its weakness, but he needs no less to know what has given it its strength. Some comprehensive knowledge of the history and writings of a religion may be obtained at home, and should be obtained before the field is entered.

b. The difference between the other religions and Christianity should not be minimized.

It should not be represented that there is little to choose among religions, or that without Christ men

are likely to grow up into a condition as good as that to which he would bring them. The religion of the living God, and of his grace and salvation in Jesus Christ, should be presented in its own characteristic quality and strength, and made to appear in contrast to all other religions whatsoever. The power of God in Christ to work a new experience and make of men new creatures should be the constant theme. In the spirit of candor and love, missionaries should always be presenting the gifts and excellences in which Christianity stands alone, and should make it plain that this is the religion to which all others ought to yield. Compromise between religions is not to be thought of when one of them is Christianity, the religion of the real God and Saviour. This point is not mentioned because missionaries have been accustomed to take the wrong ground respecting it, for they have not, but because it is true and important, and because a time may come when the tendency to overestimate the other religions will affect our missionary efforts.

*c.* Yet all good that other religions contain should be freely and generously recognized.

The first feeling upon entering a country may very naturally be horror and indignation at the lowness



of life and the seeming emptiness of religion. The conclusion may arise that the religion does not even contain a germ of truth or good; or if any good is acknowledged in it, it may be acknowledged only by grudging concession, and treated as of no consequence. The missionary may see nothing but the evil, and be sure that the every-day religion is absolutely worthless. To entertain such views is sometimes held to be a duty. It is often supposed to be a missionary's function to paint the heathen and all that pertains to them as darkly as possible, in order to quicken zeal for sending them the gospel. It is easy to paint their religions in dark colors, and overlook everything in them that deserves a brighter hue.

Nevertheless nothing that has lived long and been influential like the great religions is altogether bad. The better element exists, and is not wholly severed from the common life. Those who are taught by Christ, ought to look sympathetically upon the religious endeavors of humanity beyond the circle of his great revelation, and to appreciate any good, as well as any evil, that may be found there. Any common ground that a missionary can legitimately find between himself and the people whom he desires to influence is just so much clear gain for his purpose,



and should not be sacrificed. Moreover, a missionary should come, in the course of time, to feel a genuine unity with his people, so deep and strong that he will not willingly talk of their darker side, but shall be inwardly impelled to cover their shame and hide their disgrace, rather than to reveal it. Only through such identification of himself with his people in their honor and dishonor alike can he expect to take fast hold of their inmost hearts, and become able to do for them the greatest possible good. Only by such chivalrous love and self-identification, it may also be said, can he fully express the spirit of Christ the lover of men. Thus for every reason, — in order to do justice, to make the most of common ground, to enter into the life of his people, and to be in full measure a Christian, — a missionary should be sure to judge generously and with sympathetic spirit the religions of the world that are not Christian. What is true of the missionary is true also of the Christian people everywhere. Their judgment concerning the religions of the world should be not only a just judgment, taking account of all points of strength and weakness, but also a sympathetic judgment, into which there enters a heart that is ready to bear the burdens of others. Contempt and proud superiority have no place here.

*d.* Christ should be presented as the One who brings completion to all the partial good that other religions contain.

They are religions, more or less correctly so named, and they have grown up for satisfaction of the religious element in man. They could not have grown up and lived so long a life, if they had not taken a real hold upon the religious nature and offered some partial good for its satisfaction. But when the missionary of Christ comes in, their partial good is thenceforth to serve as the suggestion of something better and more complete. The elements of good that they contain indicate a need and utter a call, rather than provide a satisfaction. Christianity offers the satisfaction. How true this is, a few specifications will suffice to show.

The religions all take hold of the human instinct of worship. It is man the worshipper who has them. But they lead men to worship inferior objects, and frequently objects utterly unworthy. Often they spend the strength of men in conciliating powers that are supposed to be unfriendly or actually hostile. They tend to make of worship a cringing fear or else a selfish seeking. The instinct of worship is a good thing, and the practice of worship is right and good, but the good is only partial until the worthy object

of worship is set before the soul. Christianity sets forth the Father, and calls men to worship the perfect goodness in tender and holy relation with themselves. It not only gives them a God instead of gods; it gives them a God who is worthy of all their adoration and all their love, and it wins them to worship him by means of his gracious self-revelation and approach to them. Thus it completes the partial good.

The religions generally know, more or less adequately, the sense of sin. Conscience is a human endowment, though far from uniform in depth and truthfulness. Man usually knows himself wrong, sometimes slightly and sometimes profoundly, and the sense of sinfulness gives character to much of his religion. The keenness of the sense of sin is dulled, in China by the absence of the sense of God and in India by a pantheistic philosophy, and everywhere the consciousness of being wrong is awakened in part by the wrong occasions; and yet the sense of sin is not destroyed. The sense of sin is a good, because it is a sense of what is true. It would be better if it were deeper, because the truth of sin is greater than the religions have suspected. The gospel of Christ makes greater this sense of a great reality, enlightens the conscience, confirms self-

blame, and brings in the means of keeping this true consciousness alive in spite of temptations to pride and self-delusion. But it does more, for it is a gospel of salvation. Of relief from sin the religions of the world know nothing. They do not know any one God so related to men that forgiveness can be an act of his; and they do not know any holy and gracious will, from which the delivering of men from moral evil could be expected. Christianity offers the free forgiveness of sins through the love that is revealed in Christ, and purification from sin by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and its offer is to be tested by experience, where it is found to be true. Thus again Christianity completes the partial good.

The religions have their ethical teaching. In some of them it is very good, up to a certain point. Duty is recognized, more or less clearly, everywhere, and principles and precepts concerning the ethical aspect of life are everywhere found. Much of this ethical teaching is worthy of grateful recognition. Christianity should neither disparage nor fail to honor the ethical good that the great religions embody in their teaching. But the ethical teaching of the religions is grounded in human relations alone, and not in divine and eternal realities. It is not an evil, but a good, to ground ethics in human relations, for men

are so related to one another that duties have in these relations a solid ground. But this is only a partial good, and the full strength of ethics is not discerned until the very principle of duty itself is felt to be grounded in the eternal reality of the holy and gracious God. Christianity declares that this is true, and thus completes the partial good of the religions in the realm of ethics. In another way it does the same; for in the experience of the Christian life there is found a strong and soul-constraining motive to the practice of high ethics, such as no religion in the world has ever known.

The religions have their outlooks into another life. The sense of destiny to a life beyond the present enters in some form into them all. The outlook is now clear and decided, now dim and uncertain, now strong and now weak in consciousness of lasting personality, but it is generally real and influential. More often than otherwise, however, it has no brightness, but is rather a cloud upon the present life. Even where the future life is regarded with desire, the desire is not always of the purest. Doubtless any outlook into the future life is a good, for it lifts man above the earth, and constitutes an immeasurable enlargement of the scope of his conscious being. But it is only a partial good, as long as it is dark and



cheerless or in any way unworthy of the best that is human. Christianity is distinctly a religion of immortality. It brings immortal hope of perfect goodness, blessedness and usefulness in an endless Christian life in fellowship with the good God; and thus it gloriously completes the partial good that the religions have in their outlook upon the future.

In all these important respects Christianity crowns the life of man, and brings completion to what his religions have offered him. To the need of the Christian completion missionaries should appeal. Men have enough in the old religions to make them either miserable or self-satisfied, and need the gifts of Christ, at once to humble them and lift them up to the true blessedness. In proclaiming the good God and free saving grace in Christ, the missionary brings to all imperfect good in the religions of the world the completion that it needs, and offers satisfaction to the longing heart of mankind. No wonder that Christ, knowing the meaning of his own mission, said to his friends, "Go, make disciples of all the nations." He well knew that no religion of the world is worthy to stand against the divine message of life and power that he was inspiring his friends to bear.



## VI

### ORGANIZATION FOR MISSIONARY PURPOSES

EFFICIENCY in missions not only requires a true sense of the end in view, a fair knowledge of the field and a just estimate of other religions; it also demands some organization adapted to the purpose. Work at random is largely work in vain. The enterprise is in any case a great and exacting one, and common wisdom requires that the work be rationally organized.

Certain obvious ideals have never yet been attained. Thus far, no comprehensive plan has ever been formed for uniting the entire Christian force of a country for missionary effort. Neither, except in some very limited fields, has the entire missionary work that is carried on in a single foreign country ever yet been organized as a whole and conducted as a single enterprise. These are obvious ideals, but apparently they have long to wait. In this view, system and unity of organization are still lacking, and a certain loss of power is the result.

But within each of the Christian denominations that are engaged in missions system has been introduced

to some extent, and each of them has its organization for missionary work. Some organizations have been formed that represent Christians in various denominations, but thus far the greater number of missionary organizations have been denominational. This is true both of home missions and of foreign.

Methods of denominational organization for missionary purposes differ according to the structure and practice of the denominations themselves. Churches that are organized as wholes, as the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Episcopal, commit their missionary work to official church Boards. The more loosely-organized denominations, as the Congregational and the Baptist, commit theirs to voluntary societies organized specially for the purpose. In actual work on the mission-field, however, there is no radical difference between the official Boards and the voluntary societies; and the entire class of denominational organizations, whether official or voluntary, may just as well be considered together. Much that is said of these will also prove equally true of societies that are not confined to a single denomination.

The functions of a missionary society, or board, as they are exercised in the present order of things, are somewhat as follows.

In relation to the Christian people at home: the missionary society is the representative of the Christian people, organized that it may promote and conduct their missionary enterprise. In this relation a society has various duties. It has to work upon the home people whom it represents, in order to nourish in them the missionary interest. To this end it must keep in communication with them, and disseminate helpful information of every kind, and thus labor to educate the church in heart and mind for the fulfillment of its missionary calling. A society has also to collect from the church at home the money that the work requires. For the use of this money after it has been collected, that it may be spent as wisely as possible, the society is solely responsible, and a great responsibility is thus laid upon it. It must make the plans and execute them, and thus take practical charge of the actual work. With reference to this part of its affairs, a missionary society is a business corporation, under obligation to conduct its business in accordance with the methods of the world and to maintain a commercial standing, with credit above reproach; and at the same time it is a religious organization, bound to maintain the Christian spirit and judgment in its affairs, and conduct the missionary enterprise as a Christian service. It must

be frank in its reports, and must in every way be careful to deserve and retain the confidence of its constituency.

In relation to missionaries: the society is the employer and supporter of the missionaries on the field, and the body to which they are responsible. A society seeks out men and women who are fit and willing to engage in missionary service. It judges of their qualifications, and when they are approved it takes them into its service and distributes them among its fields of labor. In the distribution it must study adaptation as far as possible, and must consider the necessities that various fields present. It conveys the missionaries to their fields of labor. It has to obtain and own suitable land and buildings for their residence and work, and the various appliances that the work requires. It maintains communication with them, receives their reports from time to time, counsels with them and directs them with reference to their work, provides for them while they are engaged in missionary service, and takes care of them, so far as it is right that they should be taken care of, when they are disabled or worn out. The society is the responsible director of a general missionary policy, and must develop, from experience and observation, a method of applying general principles to the task

in hand. Questions often arise concerning which it might seem to an observer that the missionaries on the field ought to have the deciding voice, but concerning which, nevertheless, the society at home, as the director of a missionary policy broader than any single field, is rightly the court of last resort. Of course a society must always seek to deserve and possess the confidence of its missionaries.

In relation to the missionary enterprise in general: the society is organized to study the missionary problem, and to seize the missionary opportunity. Of course a society must maintain a thorough acquaintance with all of its own various fields. It must be familiar with their locality and history, understand their various conditions of work, and be informed of their progress. In concert with the missionaries it must conduct the large work upon intelligent and appropriate methods. But it must look beyond its own operations, and acquire for its use a large knowledge of missionary work in general. It must be familiar with the whole enterprise. Learning from all sources, it must become possessed of a rational and Christian missionary policy, according to which it shall steadily and patiently conduct its work. It must see what others are doing, in order to learn. It must investigate possible improvements in mission-



ary methods, and introduce them to its own work whenever it is practicable. While it firmly holds the methods that its own experience has vindicated, it must yet be ready for better methods as soon as they can be brought in. Moreover, a society must always be watching the movements of the world. It must take advantage of new openings when they appear, and organize forward movements in new regions whenever it is wise and practicable to do so. It ought to live in fraternal consultation with other societies of similar purpose, and be ready in every way to further the extension of the kingdom of God.

This brief statement is far from telling all that has to be done by that great corporate personality which we call a missionary society or board. But enough has been said to make it plain that a missionary society is constantly bearing a vast responsibility. In respect of responsibility and laboriousness, there is scarcely any other Christian service that is comparable to that of the officers of such societies. Missionary secretaries have to conduct a work of which the delicacy and difficulty are very largely unappreciated. It can scarcely be otherwise, for very few persons know missionary operations from the inside, and most Christians have no experience that would help them to enter into the problems of the missionary



board. But the fact ought to be taken more closely home to the popular Christian heart, that a missionary society is conducting a work of exceptional magnitude and difficulty, under conditions that render misjudgment of its doings extremely easy; and that its officers deserve sympathetic and respectful judgment from all their brethren.

It is the common practice to conduct the work of missions through the agency of great societies, but this method does not escape criticism. Some think it can be improved upon. The advantages and disadvantages of this method of operation may be stated and compared.

In favor of working through the great societies it may be said that this method concentrates missionary interest and effort among Christians. So large a work seems to call for large groupings of force. With respect to the missionaries themselves, this method provides a way in which earnest men and women may enter fields of missionary service, which by themselves they might not be able to reach. It offers a ready channel for the missionary interest and gifts of Christians. It conducts the work more economically than it could be conducted by scattered efforts. It has the valuable effect of unifying the

work of a particular group or company of Christians, so that the supporters of the work can see it for what it is, and the results can be brought tangibly before them so as to awaken their gratitude, confirm their confidence and deepen their interest. It gives a group of Christians a group of missions, and keeps the world from seeming too large. It fosters a sense of unity between group and group, and renders communication easy.

It may be said also that the method of working through societies promotes efficiency on the field. As a rule, under all methods that have yet prevailed, missionaries must be supported from home. They cannot generally do efficient work and earn their own living. If there are exceptions to this rule they are rare. If it ever becomes common for entire communities to be transported from Christian lands into heathen countries, there may be self-supporting missionaries in considerable numbers; but that is no part of the present method. At present, the society assures a proper support to the missionaries, and leaves them free for their work. Not often has the promised support failed. Again, missionaries work better for being in groups; and a society places and arranges them better than separate individuals would be likely to place themselves. Missionary work re-

quires, as we have said, a steady and intelligent policy, a method of applying principles, under which the labor of many men through many years may be gathered into unity by wise counsel and directed to a common end. A great society is able to have a strong continuous policy, whereby strength is conserved and waste of energy is measurably prevented; but missionaries laboring separately would inherit no traditions of method, and be sustained by no organized experience, and find a strong policy almost beyond their reach. It should be added that the present method renders possible some intelligent planning for extension of the work, offers some security against disaster from unexpected misfortune, and provides some readiness for those occasional costly enlargements of operation which success in missions renders obligatory.

Against these advantages certain disadvantages must be offset. There are some serious risks of mistake and harm.

In its relation to the people at home, a society may become too independent a corporation. Like any representative body, a missionary society may become narrow and dictatorial. It may largely forget that it represents the people. It may fall out of sympathy

with the people, and become unresponsive to the best in their Christian thought and feeling; or it may be too far in advance of the people, and lead on, more bravely than wisely, where they are not prepared to follow. It may assume to possess all the wisdom that there is, and try to repress healthy criticism upon its proceedings. It may be weak or unwise in financial management, and thus alienate its indispensable friends by failing to command their confidence. All these mistakes are possible. It should be added, however, that such dangers at home are greatly diminished by the constant dependence of a society upon the people whom it represents. A society that is seriously distrusted by its constituents will hear from them, in a manner that cannot be disregarded.

In its relation to its missionaries abroad a society is not less beset with risks of error. It may not trust its missionaries sufficiently, and may thus alienate them. It may be overbearing toward them; or, on the contrary, it may yield to them too much, to the sacrificing of its own duty of general control. It may be rash or unwise or prejudiced, in the adjustment of such personal differences as are liable to arise on the field. It may grope its way, and not attain to a genuine missionary policy; or it may adopt one that is not wise. Even a good general policy it may

apply too narrowly and rigidly, as if it were sure to suit all cases alike. It is very easy for a missionary society to become too conservative. Its own accepted ideas and traditional practices may obtain too strong a right of way in its proceedings. It may be too timid about trusting new impulses. A society is sure to become a large owner of real estate abroad, and of invested funds at home; and vested interests always incline in some way toward conservatism. The difficulty of introducing new things in Christian thought and teaching may easily postpone or forbid what is really a duty, and keep the mission-fields far behind the church at home in Christian knowledge. Further, a society may persist in remaining too long in fields where it has invested much labor, and be too slow in striking out into new endeavors. Old necessities may prevent the call of new from being heard, when it ought to be attended to.

Both at home and abroad, the existence of a great society may have the effect of repressing individual initiative. This fault is often charged upon societies, and it is possible for the accusation to be true. A society may come to think itself the only agency, and its way the only way. It may have no welcome for suggestions of improvement in its methods. It may discourage fresh movements in new forms, even



though they give good evidence of having sprung from the Spirit of God. It may underestimate and practically disparage Christian independence, and boldness in holy enterprise, preferring what is moderate and seems safe to what is courageous and seems too full of risk. This over-cautious tendency is inevitably increased by the dependence of a great treasury upon popular contributions, which are always uncertain in amount and may at any time so disappoint expectations as to render debt unavoidable. It is a great work of faith in any case to administer the vast work of a missionary society in reliance upon church contributions for support, and it would be nothing strange if in such conditions the impulse of faith were sometimes lost in the over-cautiousness that comes of frequent disappointment.

These are perhaps the main advantages and disadvantages of conducting missions through the agency of great societies or boards. But it must not fail to be added that the history of missionary societies has on the whole been highly honorable and successful. Mistakes have of course been made, and no administration has been perfect; but there is great reason to be thankful for the piety and wisdom that have generally been manifest in the management of our great missionary societies. They are often sharply criti-



cised, and it is needless to admit that sometimes the criticism is just and the blame that is given is deserved. But in the current experience of the years, apart from special cases and occasions, it is the fact that the sharpest criticism usually comes from those who know the work only from the outside, and have no idea either of its real magnitude or of the immense complications that it involves. Large parts of the work of missionary boards imply matters that are private and confidential in their nature. A certain amount of reserve is absolutely required by justice and by the interests of the work. Matters that can be openly discussed are often fully intelligible only to those who know great classes of surrounding facts. When a society or board is blamed about some occurrence on the foreign field, there is almost sure to be involved some personal matter in which prejudice for or against some one may easily mislead an outside judgment, and even in the inner circle a just and wise judgment requires the utmost caution. All administrative work is of course justly open to candid and reasonable criticism, and no missionary society expects or asks to escape it; but there are comparatively few persons who are thoroughly qualified to criticise the administration of the great missionary organization, except in a very general way. Even

for those who have intimate knowledge enough to be capable of intelligent criticism, it often proves far easier to see faults in the policy of the great societies than to propose radical improvements upon their general method of administration. It is a case where correction even of acknowledged faults, though it be ever so much desired, is often beset with unsuspected difficulty. Hence the case is one that evidently calls for mutual confidence and loyal co-operation among those who are interested together in missions. Our great societies occasionally need reproof, and oftener need improvement, but they usually ought to have the hearty confidence and support of the people whom they represent.

Within recent years a new feature of organization has appeared, in the formation of separate missionary societies by women. Generally, though not always, these work in connection with denominational societies. They adopt certain parts of the work, especially in education, and support their own laborers in the field. Women have proved unusually successful in collecting missionary contributions in moderate amounts from a wide circle of givers. They have shown power in administration also, and their work as a whole has abundantly justified itself by its use-

fulness. This separate organizing of women has come naturally in the period when women are justly claiming their opportunity and proving their power in large affairs, and it is serving a most useful purpose. Nevertheless one can scarcely think of it as the ideal plan for centuries to come. Most probably the separateness will by and by prove to have done its work, and a larger and more effective unity will follow, in which all separate powers combine to strengthen one another in a common endeavor.

Other methods than that of great societies are often proposed. This is not surprising, for there is no presumption that any one way of organization is the only good way, and the existing method, as we have seen, has its defects as well as its excellences. In the denominations that hold to the congregational polity there are some who think that Christianity properly knows no organization but the local church, and feel that to conduct missionary work through an official board or a voluntary society is to neglect this, the one organization through which Christian work ought to be done. From this view of the case comes now and then the proposal that each church send out its own missionary or missionaries, and directly assume their support and the oversight of their work.

A strong church might send out a man, or a family, or more than one. Churches of less ability might combine their forces, and a group or association of such churches might take care of a man, or a family. The support of the missionary would then be a fixed charge, to be counted in among the regular expenditures of the church, like the support of the pastor. In such cases the missionary would report to the church or larger group by which he was supported, and receive from it whatever counsel or direction he was to have from the home-country. Not the same as this by any means, it should be noticed, is the plan followed in some cases, for a local church to have its own chosen missionary on the foreign field and support him through the general society, to which he is responsible as its other missionaries are.

In favor of this plan of church-missions it is claimed by those who rise to urge it, that it would put the responsibility where it belongs, on the actual living members of the churches; that since interest goes with responsibility, it would vastly extend intelligent interest in missions among the churches at home; that it would distribute both the responsibility and the interest over a far wider field, and would thus be likely to draw out a larger and better body of recruits for the foreign service; that it would put the

chief honor and burden upon faith, by leading to immediate reliance upon the actual missionary spirit and the power of God in Christians instead of upon the machinery, as it is often called, of missionary boards and business methods; and that in every way it corresponds better to the spirit of Christ than the ordinary method of working through societies.

On the other hand, it is urged, against this plan of church-missions, that the missionary work requires not faith alone, but also wisdom and good judgment; that this plan would make missionaries dependent upon local interest in a narrow field, which might prove fitful, and upon financial ability that might unexpectedly fail, and thus subject them to danger of neglect, suffering and inability to carry on their work; that it would entrust large distant interests to the hands of ill-informed people, and thus render unwise management certain; that it would render practically impossible any comprehensive missionary policy, and make the work accidental and fragmentary; that it would naturally limit the provision to bare necessities, and fail to provide for those occasional extraordinary expenditures which are rendered necessary by success as well as by unforeseen misfortunes, and are indispensable to efficiency; and that the enterprise of planting Christianity in new lands requires effort



more deliberate and well-directed than any that this method seems to promise.

How far is such a method practicable? There are many churches to which it would be financially possible. A few may be found that are strong enough in organization and wise leadership to work in this way with some promise of success. Missionary operations call for statesmanship as well as faith. There are not very many churches that possess the gifts for such administration of distant affairs; and even in the case of these it would always be a question whether their separate work was as useful as the same amount of work done in the fellowship of a larger body. As for the smaller churches that would have to work in groups, a group of them would almost invariably be found lacking in the administrative ability, the largeness of mind and the unity of counsel that such work would require. Those who propose this method usually do not know how exacting a work the conducting of missions really is. While the societies do their work as well as they have done it hitherto, probably the method of separate local support will not, and should not, be largely adopted. Nevertheless, to say this is not altogether to rule the method out as one that has no chance of being valuable. It is quite conceivable that conditions might arise in



which a spiritual and efficient church would be led by true Christian spirit and judgment to found a mission of its own.

Along with church-missions, individual missions should be mentioned. Wealthy individuals or families have sometimes established missions of their own, and sustained them with generous and watchful care. Such undertakings often spring from the genuine Christian heart, and are conducted with great self-sacrifice, and with much usefulness. It needs no proof, however, that they should be undertaken only with the utmost thoughtfulness and caution. Peculiar perils attend them, for lives are short and fortunes are uncertain, and the long and various work is liable to develop emergencies that may overtax the wisdom or patience of individual founders. We meet also with individuals, or very small groups of persons, who go to foreign lands at their own charges, to work apart from any organization. The motive to such personal movements is often most excellent, but their fate is often most pathetic. They frequently end in disaster, and even at the best such an enterprise is rarely anything but wasteful of energy. They are wasteful even of faith. Individual missions of both the classes that have now been mentioned usually meet one of two destinies: they become ex-

tinct, or else they are absorbed into the work of some society. This outcome is natural. The fact is confirmed by all sorts of experience, that in the great world-enterprise of missions there is need, even in local work, of the united faith, wisdom and energy of many minds. Even in a limited field, far from home, an individual or a little group alone is at a disadvantage. There is no good work in which large co-operation and the massing of resources are more important than in Christian missions.

The general conclusion is, that an individual who desires to be useful as a foreign missionary will do best, generally speaking, to ally himself to some well-organized society, denominational or interdenominational, and become one laborer among many, responsible to a strong and intelligent directing power. This method has its drawbacks and disadvantages, but they are far less than the helps and advantages that it offers for effective work.

Yet the fact remains that all plans should leave room for new methods. It is not to be assumed that the only good way has been found, or that present methods are sufficient for the future. The present organization of Protestant Christendom for missionary work is sadly inadequate. If proof of this were de-

manded, we should only need to point to the inability of any single society to do justice to the work that is open to it in any single one of its fields, and the daily necessity under which the societies find themselves of turning away from new openings full of promise. It is sometimes said that Christendom is playing at missions. That is not true, but it is true that Christendom is working at missions with very imperfect appliances. We must live in hope of more effective organization by and by.

A day may come when the problem will somehow solve itself. If Christendom should some day rise in its spiritual might and move with one impulse upon the non-Christian world for its conversion, the present channels of activity would be insufficient, and new ones would be discovered. When the Christian people are thoroughly awake to missions, they will need, and will find, more various and elastic methods of organization than have yet appeared. For every reason, — because of the present defects, and in hope of the coming of that better day, — room should be left in our plans for new methods, and ardent desire should be reaching out toward them. Organization is in constant danger of becoming machinery. Its besetting peril is that it may repress the life that it was created to serve. Great societies are almost

never rash, and are likely to be over-cautious; and yet what seems rash is sometimes divine. The bold enterprise of David Livingstone in Africa, begun under the direction of a society but continued independently through the power of personal faith, has been worth more than words can tell for the invigoration of the missionary spirit throughout the world. We may be sure that the Spirit of God will now and then awaken brave souls to such holy ventures; and the sentiment of the church should be such as to assure them a recognition and a welcome, while the methods of the church should not be so hardened as to leave them no room when they appear. Such movements of faith are universally admired when they have passed into history: they ought to be appreciated when they are making history. Great organizations should not repress them, and the church should pray for them and expect them, and utilize them, when they come, as fresh and noble means of bringing in the kingdom of God.

## VII

### DENOMINATIONS IN MISSIONS

IN the missionary enterprise Christendom offers its religion to the world. But neither Christendom as a whole, nor even the Protestant part of Christendom, has ever yet engaged in this work as one body laboring together. The work has been taken up by groups of Christians when they were ready for it, and has been continued by their successors. Consequently, missionary work embodies the divisions of Christendom. Every church has its missions, and most missions are denominational. In Japan, for example, all the principal Protestant churches have their missions, laboring side by side with the Greek church and the church of Rome. In many lands missions of the various Protestant bodies live as neighbors, in some respects strengthening and in others weakening one another. The native churches that are gathered on mission-fields are so organized as to embody the peculiarities of the churches at home by whose efforts they were founded. Thus it comes to pass that the laboring force is divided, and that the divisions of Christendom are perpetuated abroad.



There are certain undenominational or interdenominational missions in our day, and it might be thought that these would illustrate the unity that the others fail to make apparent. To some extent they do this, for they gather laborers from various Christian bodies, to take part in a common work. But it is found as a matter of fact that these missions represent groups of Christians who hold some views in common, or entertain similar views about missionary methods, as really as do the strictly denominational societies. The unities of Christendom are not all organized. There are lines of unity that cut across the lines of organization, and some of them are quite as strong as the lines on which organization has proceeded. An undenominational mission usually represents some one of what have been called the interdenominational denominations, of which there are several existing and active at present. It may be added that an individual mission usually represents some special point of view in doctrine or in method. If the individual were not peculiar, he would probably work with some society. Thus it happens that both the undenominational and the personal missionary efforts, instead of diminishing the division on the field, tend, in some respects at least, to increase it. Certainly the interdenominational missions divide



the effort of all the denominations from which they draw support.

We need not inquire whether some other way than the denominational would not have been better at the beginning of the modern missionary movement, for at the time no other way was possible. The method introduced itself, and has perpetuated itself, without the intention or the fault of any one.

When Carey was moved to go to the heathen and sought to organize a body to sustain his work, he could not wait to unite various Christian bodies in a comprehensive missionary enterprise: he had enough to do in uniting his little group of Baptists. He was quite justified in pushing out to his work abroad as soon as anything like support could be arranged within his own circle. If he had stayed to argue the cause of union, he might have died in England. So in America, when Judson and his companions desired to go to the heathen, they naturally appealed to their own group of churches, the Congregational, for support. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which was formed to adopt and support their work, was formed as a society of Congregationalists. The Presbyterian and Reformed churches joined after a short time in its operations,

but in later years they withdrew to form denominational organizations of their own, that being the method of the period. When Judson and Rice became Baptists on their outward journey, no one thought of such a thing as that they could remain with the American Board and Baptists could there contribute to their support. Their change of views resulted at once in severing their connection with the society that had been formed in the interest of their work, and compelled the Baptists to organize themselves for missionary purposes. So it has usually been: missionary beginnings were made as they could be made, and denominational divisions entered into the structure because they were so great an element in the Christian life of the time. Work thus organized has continued until now on the lines upon which it was begun. There has been no wilful division in entering the mission-field. The action was only such as was natural and inevitable in the existing conditions.

Yet there was one interesting exception, suggestive of what might have been. The London Missionary Society was formed in 1795, three years later than the Baptist Missionary Society which rose in answer to the call of Carey. Presbyterians, Independents and members of the Church of England united in forming

this later body, it being easier for these three bodies to unite in organized effort than for any of them to unite with the Baptists. The new society declared, "That its design is not to send Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, or any other form of church government (about which there may be differences of opinion among serious persons), but the glorious gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen, and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call to the fellowship of his Son from among them, to assume for themselves such form of church government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the word of God." One cannot but wonder what would have been the result if this principle had been steadily acted upon in a long campaign by the three powerful bodies that were represented in the society. But it was not to be shown. After a time, as missionary interest extended, the Episcopalians and Presbyterians withdrew to work through organizations of their own, and the London Society was left to the Independents, who have since mainly carried it on. It thus became practically a denominational society in spite of itself, but the noble original statement of its broad purpose has always been retained. The temporariness of this large and catholic union is enough to

show that the time was not ripe for the method that it represented, and the denominational plan was the only practicable one. So, if we wish the basis had been broader, we have not to blame our fathers in England or America for organizing their missionary work according to their divisions. They did as they could.

The denominational method that was thus naturally adopted can claim some practical advantages.

It is needless, since no other way was practicable, to dwell upon the claim that no other way would actually have secured so much vigor in the prosecution of missionary work. Whatever may have been the ideal way, this at the time was the only practical working method, and it certainly has ministered to vigor in the work. All denominations have held the common substance of Christianity, and have desired to present it to the heathen world. Here resides the great central missionary motive. But at the same time each denomination has believed itself to be right in its peculiarities, and has thought it right that they should be received wherever the gospel entered. Thus to the broad general motive there has been added a narrower but perfectly sincere motive to the strong sustaining of the work that

each denomination had in hand. The combination has had a real effectiveness in quickening interest in the work. Whether we call it the noblest thing or not, we cannot deny its power, and need not hesitate to acknowledge its practical value.

There has been manifest also this strong point in the denominational method, that it entrusts each mission, and each separate missionary enterprise, to a somewhat compact and available body of people, not too large to devote to it a special attention and interest. The early committing of the Hawaiian work to the constituency of the American Board, of the work in Syria to the Presbyterians, of the work in Burma to the Baptists, and of their own fields generally to the various Christian bodies, has resulted in decided advantage to all parties. There has been a distinct missionary trust committed to each body, and each mission has had its keeper.

We sometimes hear it claimed for the denominational system that the resulting rivalries have led to greater intensity in effort, and have thus made missions more successful. This is a region, however, in which it is well to be careful about our claims. Mere denominational rivalry is not so good a thing that we can afford to boast much of its spiritual fruits. Successes built on denominational rivalry



are not sure to be of the first quality. But we may well pause also over the question of fact. Denominational rivalry, properly so called, has not played a very large part in producing genuine missionary activity. It may sometimes have led missionaries to try to gather in one another's converts, but that is not missionary work. It is true, however, that the existence of missionary work in various denominations has wrought an honorable emulation that has often been helpful to efficiency. The zeal and success of one Christian body has often stirred another to fresh interest. But this is not properly denominational rivalry: this is only an honorable provoking of one another to love and good works, which might just as well occur if fields were parcelled out on some other plan than the denominational.

To offset its strong practical points, the denominational system has its serious disadvantages, which are sometimes overstated and sometimes underestimated. Some think the evils of the method tend to become more manifest as the work advances, and some think they tend to fade away.

We cannot well deny that the denominational method is wasteful. In the home field we are extremely familiar with the superfluous expenditure of strength and means because of denominational



division. The work of home missions has suffered enormously from this cause, and is suffering still, just as the cause of Christianity is suffering in large communities and in small throughout the country. The fact of this great waste is beginning to be taken to heart, but to stop it is not so easy. Abroad the evil has not attained such proportions as at home, but it exists. It certainly would seem that in Shanghai or Calcutta, for example, the existing missionary force, representing several societies and denominations, each with its real estate, its appliances for work and its expenses of administration, could be worked far more economically if it were a single force operating together. It may be said indeed that there is plenty of room for all, and that where the need is boundless, strength and means cannot easily be spent in vain. Yet the question remains why appliances should be duplicated; why men in different missions should devote their time to doing the same kind of work when one might do it for both; why the benefit of one society's pioneering should not accrue in full to all Christian laborers. It seems a pity that the whole body of men and means cannot be wielded at the very best advantage. Yet with the denominational system more or less of waste is inevitable; and it would seem that

the larger the work the more serious must be the evil.

A more serious fact is that the denominational method exhibits a weak side of the existing Christianity in non-Christian lands. Though Christians endeavor to win the world to one faith, they do not go about the endeavor in oneness of effort. Christendom presents itself to the world as divided. Of course the representation is correct, for Christendom is divided. Yet the greater is the pity, when the work in hand is the offering of the one faith to the world. The denominational method in missions emphasizes the fact that Christianity has not yet been able to unite its own people in a practical working fellowship, or even to make them of one mind as to what Christianity itself really is. The fact of division in practical work calls attention to the points of difference. It magnifies differences, and tends to put all churches on the defensive with respect to the peculiarities that separate them from one another. Thus the method contains a strong tendency to the promotion of controversy, and makes Christian bodies appear farther apart than they really are. Sometimes the prominence thus given to differences among Christians has proved embarrassing in its effect upon the actual work. Missionaries have sometimes been

asked to agree upon what they wished an inquirer to accept as Christianity, before he would favorably consider their proclamation of it: and we cannot deny that from the inquirer's point of view the request is reasonable. This kind of embarrassment is most to be expected in countries where the people have become awake to modern thinking, and it would seem that it must increase with the advancement of converts in intelligence. For the sake of missions as well as on other grounds we may well pray and labor for the day when Christianity shall present itself to the world in a real and practical unity.

It must also be acknowledged, that the denominational method passes on to the converts from heathenism the differences and divisions that have become injurious to Christendom. The differences and divisions have had their reasons for existing, and have not been altogether harmful, but their presence in Christendom in such abundance is not the ideal thing, and they certainly have wrought injury to Christianity. It seems at present as if the Christians of the East would have to fight over again many of the historic battles. We certainly are placing among them the elements of such a warfare when we plant among them our various churches, and teach them to prize the doctrinal and practical peculiarities of these

several churches as essential parts of the religion of Christ. It certainly would seem as if the older Christendom might have fought some of these battles once for all, and might now hand on to a new race of Christians either the fruits of conflict or the terms of truce; but we seem to be assuming that the battles must be fought again on the new fields that we are opening. We are planting a new Christendom, without guarding it against a continuation of our old contentions. The full effect of this legacy of the old Christendom to the new cannot be manifest until the work is farther advanced than it has yet become. While missions continue mainly separate, forming communities that mingle but slightly with one another, the full effect does not appear. When Christianity in mission-countries has become strong enough to demand the co-operation of all its scattered adherents for large Christian purposes, the case will be somewhat different. It will then appear whether the divisive and disintegrating tendencies of denominationalism are overcome by better influences.

One other drawback to the current method should be pointed out as sure to be developed in the course of time. The denominational spirit is steadily declining at home, and a time is coming when the hold of the denominations on their people will be weaker

than it is now, and far weaker than it was when the missionary organizations were formed. But the most of the organizations are closely tied by their constitutions to denominationalism, and each of them has a denominational constituency. As a rule, none but Methodists contribute to Methodist missions, and Presbyterians to the Presbyterian work, and so on. The method works well for the time, but it would seem that when denominational bonds are somewhat loosened, denominational missions must encounter hard times. Very much of our missionary work is so wrought in with denominational life as to be greatly at the mercy of changes in such life that are sure to come. But the hope is that before that day arrives the missionary motive may have grown so strong and fine and independent as to be able to meet the crisis without loss of power. In fact, that Christian spirit which transcends sectarian limits is leading on toward this very end.

It must be thankfully added, however, that there are better influences at work, and that the evils that unquestionably belong to the denominational method in missions are greatly diminished, in actual experience, by the operation of the Christian spirit on the field. It is sometimes alleged that missionaries are more



anxious to make adherents to their own denomination than to make Christians. But the charge is not true of missions in general, or on any large scale anywhere. It is one of those reckless accusations from which the missionary cause has so often had to suffer. It is also alleged that neighboring missions of different denominations are often grasping after one another's converts, and taking other unfair advantages. No doubt such things have been done, and perhaps are still done now and then; but they have always been exceptional, and they form no part of any one's missionary policy. All societies of good standing are opposed to such proceedings, in themselves as well as in their neighbors. Not all missionaries are broad-minded or high-minded, and transgressions do sometimes occur, but they are becoming less with the progress of the work.

Both societies at home and missions on the field have cordially agreed in late years to the principle known as missionary comity, which is the principle of mutual recognition, non-interference and helpfulness. The application of the principle is not always easy, and perplexing questions arise in connection with it, but the principle itself is loyally accepted and more and more acted on. Something is done by



way of territorial division and avoidance of fields already efficiently occupied, though much that seems desirable in this respect has failed thus far to be found possible. Thus American societies generally have left Burma to the Baptists, who first occupied it; and the society of that denomination has repeatedly declined to enter the field of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Turkey. Neighboring missions are coming more and more to respect one another's discipline, and to consult together respecting certain scales of expenditure on the field. The principle of comity is applied in some degree, though as yet very imperfectly, to the question of entering territory newly opened to missionary work. In entering new fields the unquestionable difficulties in the way of Christian comity are too often triumphant. Where different denominations are working side by side, as they are in many cities of India, China and Japan, missionary comity makes them mutual helpers rather than opponents or rivals to one another. It ought to be said, however, that what is known as missionary comity receives a special name simply for convenience,—it is no special thing. It is nothing but the Christian mind of fellowship and fair dealing, applied to the problems of denominational work in Christian missions. It is simply mutual recognition,

in the name of the Lord and of common wisdom. Sometimes one almost suspects that missionary comity may be in some danger of being taken for a separate Christian grace.

Concerning native Christians, various events illustrate their sense of unity among themselves, in spite of the divisions. An interesting fact was reported a few years ago from northern China. It was proposed that certain native churches of the American Board and the London Missionary Society, both Congregational, should form a union, on the common ground of their church polity. But the native Christians were unwilling to unite, on the ground that agreement in church polity was not enough to justify such union. They declared that if they united because of their Congregationalism in polity, they would be turning their backs upon other Chinese Christians about them, who were just as near and dear to them as those who held this polity. Thus the spirit of a larger unity asserted itself. Among Christians who are thus minded, the evils of formal division are reduced to the lowest terms.

As to prospects and duties for the future, it does not appear that any general change from the denominational method in missions is possible at present, but

constant effort should be made to avoid its incidental evils.

The interdenominational societies that have arisen do not prove to bring any great contribution to this problem. They bring individuals from various denominations to their aid, but they generally hold such special views or employ such special methods as to be virtually denominational after all. No undenominational movement has arisen, or seems likely soon to arise, that is capable of standing as successor to the great denominational agencies. The method abroad cannot be altered until great changes have been wrought at home; and though changes with regard to denominationalism are undoubtedly looming up in sight, they have not yet become so definite as even to suggest any distinct possibilities concerning altered methods in missions. Whatever God may have in store for the remoter future, the present methods have yet a good while to last. All the more urgent therefore, is the duty of making them as free from harm as possible. All must be done to diminish the evils of separation and relieve the missionary work of any embarrassment that results from it. Denominational service and Christian co-operation must go hand in hand. Differences must be minimized on the foreign field. A foreign missionary

should hold the steadfast purpose to do two things, — to extend the special work to which he is specially committed, and to commend Christianity in its oneness to the world. These two things, surely, ought to be capable of being done together. Missionaries abroad are greatly helped toward a genuine unity by the great conferences that bring them together from the length and breadth of China or of India. Christians at home received a similar gift of blessing from the Ecumenical Conference of 1900, in New York.

A question of great interest and importance arises with reference to the future of denominations in the mission-field. What are the Christian churches of the mission-field destined to be hereafter? Will they continue to be like the churches through whose efforts they were founded? Will the denominations last in foreign countries? And ought they to last?

Denominations reproduce their kind, and missionaries plant churches like the churches that they represent. The Church of England in India has its dioceses and bishops, as at home. It makes the prayer-book the basis of public worship as it does in England, and forms the church in the foreign country after the likeness of the home church. Presbyterians and Methodists introduce into their

missions their own polity and their doctrines and traditional practices. The class-meeting is as much an institution in Methodist missions as it is in America. In Burma there exist essentially the same Baptist institutions as in America,—local churches with pastors and deacons, ministers ordained, public worship as at home, church customs in general introduced by missionaries and adopted with the new faith. Similar contributions from home were carried to the Hawaiians by the representatives of the American Board. All this was natural and right. But the question inevitably arises whether that which has thus been planted can be expected to remain unchanged. In considering this question all the denominations must of course be grouped together,—for we cannot each deduct his own from the total, and inquire whether the planting of the others ought to remain unchanged. All the denominations have planted their own doctrines and practices, and the resulting question concerns them all. The question is, Ought the existing Christian denominations to impart their respective peculiarities permanently to the Christian communities that they have helped to found? Will the peculiarities imparted from the west remain in the thought and practice of the eastern peoples? Can they remain? Ought we to desire it,



expect it and plan for it? Will the existing denominations stay permanently where in the founding of missions they have been placed? And in connection with these questions, in what spirit ought denominational missions to look into the future? What kind of developments should they expect?

The plain answer to this question is, that the practical dictation that came naturally and seemed inevitable at first cannot continue permanently, and ought not. Both in doctrine and in practice, each people must ultimately be itself. The future of any given people in these respects must be determined by its own national and racial character, under the influence of a vital Christianity. So it has always been in Christian history, and so it must be. Along with Christianity itself, we have introduced to Asia various forms of religious life and practice that have grown up in Europe and America and are at home there; but there is no certainty that they will be permanent in Asia, or that they can be so. Rather does all history assure us that forms of religious life and practice that are to be permanent in Asia must grow up in Asia. Permanent borrowing is impossible. Nor does Asia need to borrow from us, except for temporary use. We know what Christ can do for a



people, in the course of time. Christian truth and life will ultimately take new forms in the oriental mind, through the long course of Christian experience, and will take various forms in the experience of various peoples; and the consequence must be that the native Christian communities grow away more or less from the style and form of Christianity that they first received from other nations. As there are English and German and American forms of Christianity, so there will yet be Indian and Chinese and Japanese forms of Christianity, the special peculiarities of which, whether in doctrine, in organization or in customs, no man can foresee. The only thing clear and certain is that Christ will bring forth in the foreign peoples new forms of life, to supersede those which for his name's sake we gave them.

The attitude of the Christian people toward this certainty of change ought to be taken in the brave and generous spirit of faith. Doubtless we ought to desire Christianity to do as much for the new peoples as it has done for our predecessors and for us, and we ought confidently to expect that it will. If it is not to be so, then we are handing on to others a diminished blessing, instead of a germinant gift. But if Christianity really does as much for the peoples to whom we carry it as it has done for

our ancestors and for us, there will come to be new modes of Christian experience, new aspects of doctrine, new views of life, new methods of Christian work, new manifestations of spiritual power, new growths of Christian influence. The development of new modes in organization, doctrine and life is not something that may come, but something that must come, if Christianity does its work. It is not an evil, but a good, that this work must go on: Christianity has been richer for such experiences in the past, and will be richer for them in the future. If we do not gladly expect such developments and transformations, we do not yet put the full estimate upon the gospel that we are giving to the world. If we dread them, we have not yet learned to trust the divinity of that gospel. It is very true that in every one of the Christian denominations — in one as much as in another — this prediction of the coming change may be resented, as foretelling the overturn of something without which Christianity would not be itself. But God will be better than our fears, and will bring his children forward. Indeed, why do we bring the Christian message to peoples who have not known it, if we do not wish it to bring forth for them its full fruit of independent Christian life?

The destined changes in the mission-field will come of themselves: they should be expected and encouraged in their time, but they need not be hastened. The best promotive of them is the living and powerful Christianity itself. They will come with varying rapidity in different regions. It might be a natural first thought that uncultured tribes would be slow in bringing forth new things under Christian influence, since they have little originality developed. Yet uncultured tribes may be bright in native gifts, they have little to give up before the new force can work upon them, and it may be that they will prove leaders in the development that is to come. China, in which interruptions in mission-work will be but temporary, seems likely to be a late contributor to the Christian life of the future, for it is very great, very conservative and very unoriginal. India seems likely to be earlier, for India thinks more than China. In Japan there begin already to appear suggestions of a national Christian thought. Doubtless it is thus far crude and unformed, and the Japanese mind will have to go through much more experience before it can become truly a national Christian mind, even in a rudimentary way. But the movement of life has begun, out of which there will some day emerge a Japanese

Christian force, not quite like anything that has been in the world before. Even in Africa there will yet be such a development. If we help to make Christians of the people we help to hasten it on. Any day and anywhere in mission-fields this process may appear, — here a little and there a little, but ever increasing in force, variety and suggestiveness; and God will be in it.

The certainty of such changes brings its serious difficulties; for the independence of the new communities must not be prevented in its time, and yet its coming must needs be watched with the jealousy of a worthy love. Missions need to be conducted in loyal remembrance of the principle that

“The old order changeth, giving place to new,  
And God fulfills himself in many ways.”

What now is cannot always continue. Here again we reach from another side the statement that was made before, that missions are not permanent but temporary. Missions do not seek to perpetuate themselves: they introduce the divine creative agency in the knowledge of Christ, and encourage the full working of that transforming power. It will one day be our privilege to leave the field to itself, with the Lord. But before that day comes there will be severe tests of our faith in the present

God. When out of the sincere church of Japan the forms of Japanese Christian thought begin to appear, it may be easy, and perhaps instinctive, for western Christendom to condemn it all as no Christianity whatever, but a dangerous innovation. Even the missionaries may feel so about it. We may forget that God will have a Japanese people who will not be just like us, and fail to recognize them when they come into existence. The missionary interest may not venture to allow Japan to be itself and develop in Christianity according to its own gifts, but may insist that it be scarcely anything else than a new America or England in its Christian thought and life. That would be unspeakably sad. It would be a pity indeed if the very missions that have given the awakening gospel to the nations should ever become an enemy to the progress that they have inaugurated, through inability to discern the present Spirit and trust Christianity as a constructive force. It would then be necessary that the missionary influence be thrown off as an outgrown thing, a blessing that had become an incubus, before Christianity could do its full work. It should be our prayer that this may never come to pass. It will be the office of missionaries, as the time draws on, to help the awakened mind to do its new work



safely in Christian liberty and power, and take its place among the agencies of God in the world.

Here is apparent the delicate responsibility of the missionaries' position as the people of their charge grow toward maturity. With what tender and jealous care must a Christian missionary watch his children, leading them forward as fast as they ought to go, and yet guarding them against a premature and childish independence; unwilling to let them run into error, and yet equally unwilling to keep them an hour too long in the tutelage that was necessary at first! His aim and prayer is that when they do stand alone they may be safe. There is many a missionary who already feels the problem pressing, and is faithfully doing his best with it. The problem is sure to come sooner or later, in all mission fields, and it will call for such wisdom and patience as God alone can give.

## VIII

### THE PRESENT CRISIS IN MISSIONS

FOR some time it has been evident that the work of Christian missions was in a crisis of its own. Signs of pause have been apparent. The leading missionary societies have found themselves unusually burdened with debt, which seemed only too ready to return if by some special effort it was removed. Hard questions have been abroad. Criticism upon missions has been rife. The administration of missions has been criticised without reserve and sometimes in a spirit none too friendly, and the idea of missions itself has been called in question, even among the supporters of the work. The friends of the enterprise have encountered a sense of pause, and a feeling of partial uncertainty as to the future. To some readers this may seem too strong a statement of the actual case; but no one will question that there have been signs of weakening in the missionary impulse of the church, and of uncertainty as to the wisest policy for years to come. The missionary impulse is not dead, nor is the force extinct, nor

is the work in prospect of being abandoned; and yet the Christian people are not rising to the work with the vigor that is justified by past successes or required by present opportunities. Something has happened, to chill the ardor. There are men ready for the work, but money to send them and support them is wanting,—a fact that indicates that the trouble is with the rank and file of the people, rather than with the more intelligent and spiritual minds. The crisis is such that no adequate provision is being made by missionary societies for the work of coming years. No society is able to deal rightly with its opportunities: in fact, retrenchment has in some cases actually diminished the work, which ought to have been increasing. The crisis has been faithfully reported to the Christian people at home, but as a whole they have not been sensibly influenced by the knowledge of it. The societies are wondering what is to be possible to them hereafter, and are justifiably timid about undertaking what is required by unquestionable duty.

Such a condition has its causes, and they ought to be considered. Doubtless they are numerous. It is not likely that any one cause is responsible for it all, or probable that the situation will be found to be a very simple one. A movement so great and

so strongly impelled by motive as the missionary movement cannot thus receive even a partial check without the operation of large forces, and of forces that are likely to prove somewhat lasting. In the present case it is easy to read some of the causes, and a clear view of them is necessary if we wish to see our way to doing the duty of the hour.

Probably reaction from the early expectation of swift success must be reckoned with as one of the causes of the crisis. At the beginning, Christians had but a very faint idea of what they were undertaking when they set out to make disciples of all the nations. They could not know what it would mean, for experience alone could reveal it. Hence the early expectations were unintelligent, and far too sanguine. The solid difficulties involved in the nature of the case had not yet been discovered. There was a romantic period in the history of foreign missions, in which swifter victory was expected than the nature of the case allows. It was really expected that vast masses of organized humanity would slide easily and without resistance into the kingdom of God, so that a nation would be born in a day, and born into satisfactory Christian life. Rhetorical talk about planting shining crosses on every

hilltop was almost taken seriously. A warm enthusiasm was relied upon not only to do its own indispensable work, but to do a great deal of work besides. All victories and gains were watched, to see if the complete triumph of the gospel was not coming directly after them.

Such a period of romantic feeling had to come, and it had its noble quality, but it had to pass. It is passing, and its departure brings a certain degree of reaction. The magnitude of the enterprise is beginning to make itself influential, both upon the judgment and upon the feeling of those who are concerned. The length of processes is beginning to be impressive: a generation or two of work is enough to make it so. It is both seen and felt that there is no probability of any nation being born in a day into a satisfactory Christian life, or indeed into any Christian life at all; and then, on looking back for the authority for the hope, it is observed that the supposed promise in the Scriptures of such a quick national birth was really no promise whatever. The more prosaic thinking of the later time is far truer and more trustworthy than the romantic thinking of earlier days, and in the long view of things its coming is a most encouraging sign, for which we must give thanks to God who is leading us; but for



the time its coming brings a sense of pause. The rush is over, and the steady pull begins. It surely will begin, or rather is beginning, and will be kept up; but it is not surprising that for the moment there is a reaction of feeling, with sense of discouragement.

This change of feeling has been wrought by means of a great fact that has wider significance and teaches further lessons, — namely, the new knowledge of the world. How influential this new knowledge is, and how radically it works, it is hard for us to imagine. The world is conceived to-day by the ordinary Christian mind as it could not possibly be conceived by any one a century ago. It is viewed now with eyes far more intelligent, and at the same time far more business-like. To the ordinary mind much less than a century ago, Japan was only a name, China was an unopened mystery, and the mention even of India appealed far more to the sense of wonder than to any intelligent thought. The darkness of ignorance colored only by a glamour of strangeness hung over distant lands, and missionary work in them could not possibly be planned with any due knowledge of the conditions and the need. But at the present day travel and trade have brought the lands near to one another. Communication is perpetual. There is no

country concerning which reasonably trustworthy information cannot be obtained in abundance. Travellers observe as they did not know how to observe a century ago, and report their results in popular form, to a public that has learned to care for information. Political relations, too, impart the keenest interest to lands once unreal to us. International relations have grown up. A moment has come when the great national powers are eager to grasp the outlying parts of the earth, and great movements of diplomacy and of war are concerned with those regions in which our missionary interest is centred. A zeal for developing trade with far-off peoples has suddenly sprung up, and there is no American city that has not a financial interest in the relations that our country sustains to missionary lands. With facilities of travel and the growing practice of travelling, remoteness is a lost fact; and the unspeakable wonder of telegraphic communication completes the change.

The consequence of all this is that to maintain the way of thinking about the world that was prevalent, and was the only possible way of thinking, when modern missions began, has passed out of the realm of possibility. To think of the United States of America to-day is to think a thought that was im-

possible a hundred years ago. The same is true, of course, of our thinking about China, or Japan, or Hawaii. To think of mankind, or of the world for which Christ died, is to entertain a thought that is very largely new. In great measure the world itself is new, as the instance of the United States is sufficient to show; and in great measure our knowledge of the world has changed. No one until now could possibly have in mind what we have in mind when we speak of man. And the difference between our conception of man and that of a century ago is not mainly that something true has fallen out of it, though that may be the fact with many minds: it is rather that immeasurably much that is true has been added to it. Unquestionably our conception of man is still incomplete, unbalanced, and incorrect, but it certainly has been altered within the century by the addition of much that must remain in any true conception. Our knowledge has experienced true and legitimate growth, and from our present conception of the human world we can never go back to that which our fathers held when they began the work of modern missions.

The consequence of this change as it affects missions is plain enough. Our fathers knew definitely

but little about the human race and the conditions of life in various lands; but their minds and their hearts took hold upon mankind through its whole extent as a sinful and needy mass, to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ, who as yet was unknown to the greater part. Their children have added much knowledge of the lands and their life, and have come to think of the peoples of the world, as the fathers could not, in terms of travel, politics, and commerce. Some of them retain the fathers' feeling about the need of faith in Christ for salvation, and some are earnest in convictions concerning the missionary enterprise; but some have lost their fathers' feeling about this, in the multitude of other thoughts and under the pressure of new relations. To hold the idea that suggested missions, as our exclusive thought about the peoples of the world, is now absolutely impossible; no warmest friend of missions does it or can do it, for other thoughts belong to our necessary mental furniture. To hold it at all may require a mental effort. Is any one to be blamed for the change? Certainly not, for it has come in the course of the normal movements of humanity, and on the whole it is a good change. Our thought concerning our fellow-men contains elements of truth and justice that our fathers knew nothing of.

The best Christian feeling toward the heathen world to-day is far more true, righteous, sympathetic, Christ-like, than the feeling of the Christians who were interested in missions a hundred years ago. But the single motive which, standing alone, led to the missionary enterprise, has come to be so surrounded by other thoughts and motives as to lose its relative force, and be less available than it then was as a controlling influence. This is one great and significant cause of the present crisis in missions. Knowledge of the world, swiftly increasing, has grown away from adjustment to the missionary motive in its earlier form, and there is need of a new grouping of facts and thoughts together, if the motive is to regain its power.

It should be added that the modern intercommunication of peoples, while in the large it has ministered to this general change, has brought forth some special results that are unfavorable to missionary interest and success. In two ways this has been done. On the one hand, the defects of Christendom have freely and unsparingly advertised themselves in foreign parts. The governments of the so-called Christian nations have appeared exactly as they were, with their combination of justice and injustice, of civilization and barbarism, of helpfulness and greed.



Sometimes their influence has been favorable to Christianity, but too often it has offered a most unhelpful commentary on the character of the religion that missionaries were seeking to commend. Worst of all is the hypocrisy with which nations allege Christian motives in justification of their land-grabbing, oppression, and unrighteous wars. No anti-Christian influence in the orient is more direct than this, or more deadly. At the same time the modern habits of trade and travel have placed upon oriental shores, especially in the chief ports, a great mass of men from Christendom, whose conduct is anything but honorable to the Christian name. With perfect justice Christianity can disown them as no fruit of its work, but it cannot be expected that orientals will make distinctions in such a case, and the influence of such men stands as a visible argument against the Christian faith. And on the other hand, the practice of travel has sent home numbers of journeying Americans who have seen no missions when abroad, not having looked for them, and who report the unfriendly gossip of the society in which they have mingled, bearing the testimony of ignorance and prejudice against missionaries and their work. These, having travelled, speak with all the authority of experts

about the oriental world, and there are many people at home who suppose their contempt for missions to be the result of intelligent investigation. With the proverbial swiftness of what is false, such testimony can scarcely be overtaken by the reports of the travellers who have sought missions out and looked upon their work, and bring home a different story. Hence there comes a depressing influence from travel, which is only too effective. So it comes to pass that the practice of intercommunication has incidentally helped to make the missionary work more difficult abroad, and has brought home unfriendly reports to discourage it here.

The crisis is not wholly brought over from the foreign field, or caused by views that we take of it. There are causes at home that make their contribution. The new modes of knowing and thinking that are characteristic of our time inevitably have their influence upon the general missionary feeling.

It is a plain fact that in all external aspects, and in many aspects that are not external, the life that we are living is radically unlike the life that our fathers lived. Our life is in the sharpest contrast with theirs in respect of physical surroundings, of common conveniences, and of mental suggestions.

We are hourly doing what to them would have seemed almost miraculous, and we do it with scarcely a thought that it is wonderful. Even from this source, there has come to us a change in the soil from which the missionary motives grow. Not only do we look out upon a different world from that of our fathers: we look out from a different world also, in which suggestions come from new quarters and our moral impulses rise under new influences. New formative powers are upon us on every side, and it is impossible that our movements, whether intellectual or moral, should be exactly what those of our fathers were. If we retain ideas that were powerful with them, we retain them amid new surroundings, and they cannot be precisely the same. By the influence of new social forms, of new industrial conditions, of multiplied conveniences, of a more rapid age, our judgments are insensibly affected. Old motives are not just what they were, and new adjustments in mind are rendered indispensable if our old works are to go on efficiently. There is no escape from this state of things, and it would be most unwise to overlook it.

With all the rest, there has come in with power a new set of ideas. In spite of all the visible revolutions, the deepest changes have not been wrought in

the realm of visible things: more significant revolutions have occurred in the region of dominant thoughts. We are thinking in new mental surroundings, and seeing in new light. Science has immeasurably extended our knowledge of things that are, and discovery has brought new determining facts to our possession. There has come in, for the use of us all, a method of learning what is true, which is in great degree a new method. We call it the scientific method. The amount of it is, in a word, that we do not know anything that we have not learned. Facts are decisive of judgments. Whether anything is true depends on evidence, and we have no right to say or assume that something is true, in advance of the examination that will prove or disprove it. This test of things was not unknown a century ago, of course, but within the century it has come to be recognized and accepted far more fully than ever before, and applied to knowledge of every kind. It is a sound principle, and a searching one, and it cannot be disowned. Very naturally the acceptance of this test has great influence upon the popular feeling with regard to missions. If the influence is silent and often unnoticed, it is not less real on that account. When we accepted the missionary work that our fathers bequeathed to us, we assumed that we

knew what was the state of the distant nations, and adopted a course of conduct toward them in accordance with our assumption. But now it appears that our fathers knew little about them, and only to-day are we beginning to be really acquainted with them, so as to be able to judge rightly of their moral state. Were we right? Perhaps we were not justified in acting toward them as our fathers began to act before the dawn of that acquaintance which alone can show us how we ought to treat them. When we understand them better shall we send missions to them? we are asked. Even knowing them as well as we know them now, are we quite sure that what we are actually offering them through the missions that we send is what they need and what we ought to offer? If we ought to give them missions, are we giving them the right missions? In whatever way these questions are destined to be answered, they are certain to be asked, and cannot be repelled. They are asked, far and wide, and the fact of their presence is one of the elements in the making of the missionary crisis.

It is often said, and said truly, that the great determinative idea that has entered the world in our time is the idea of evolution. It certainly has



entered, and a determinative idea it certainly is, — an idea that determines the attitude of one whom it influences, with regard to the entire range of thought and knowledge. The influence of the idea is far from being limited to the circle in which the doctrine of evolution has been formally or even consciously accepted. Many persons think they are uninfluenced by the doctrine because they doubt it, or even reject it, or because it lies in a region of thought in which they are not qualified to pass judgment. But such limitations upon influence do not hold. The idea of evolution has power with our generation, whether the doctrine is approved or disapproved. It affects all sorts and conditions of intelligent men, and the unintelligent do not escape it. The influence of it appears in many forms, and it finds various doors of entrance to the field of missionary interest. For one thing, it leads to a very important modification of our feeling about the length of processes; and by this means it affects our feeling about missions.

Under the influence of the idea of evolution, we come to regard one thing as growing out of another, and to look upon anything that now exists as the outgrowth of previous existence and conditions. This in fact is the pith of the doctrine; and it is

through the introduction of this habit of looking at things that the idea of evolution is exercising so wide and deep a popular influence. When in our own time we are reminded of missions, we are reminded also that we are to regard man, in the light of good evidence, as having been on the earth much longer than we supposed, and that we must think of his institutions throughout the world as the result of an age-long growth. Then it begins to be asked how long these religions that we think of displacing have been in growing up to their present condition; how long a time it has taken them to reach their present development and get their present hold upon the peoples that are attached to them; how firm their hold will therefore probably be found to be, and how long it will take to introduce a new faith in place of them. We need not be surprised if we are told that the established condition of life in China is the result, at a very moderate estimate, of twenty thousand years of continuous resident life in that country. Then we shall be told that it is a far greater undertaking than our fathers thought to overthrow so ancient an order, to detach men's minds from a system that is so thoroughly their own, and to introduce a religion possessed of qualities which the Chinese thought of so many ages has not known. We need

not be surprised if some who encounter this view of the undertaking draw back with a sense of the hopelessness of such an enterprise; and we certainly have to expect that all who encounter this view will be impressed by an unsuspected greatness and audacity in the missionary enterprise, and feel that the work is a longer and harder one than they had thought.

It should be added that this testimony of the doctrine of evolution is in perfect accord with the testimony of missionary experience. Missionaries are impressed by the antiquity of the religions, and the vast power that antiquity imparts. It is surpassed only by what some one has called "the fatal antiquity of human nature." Man is no beginner. He has certainly had time to become thoroughly confirmed in his ways, and our attempts to transform him have to take him as he is, after the course of unmeasured ages. All thorough and faithful missionary work agrees in testifying to the depth and strength of human evil, and the length and difficulty of the work of winning the Christian victory.

It is well if another aspect of modern thought does not prove influential. At a certain stage of evolutionary thought the whole system is apt to take on a fatalistic tone. The stage passes, but first it comes. That has grown, we are told, which had to

grow. All was inevitable, and therefore best. Out of the soil of humanity came forth that which humanity could produce, and that which humanity ought to have. If the Chinese character brought forth Confucianism, Confucianism is what the Chinese character requires. If India was the native home of Hinduism, Hinduism is the best thing for India. Nations that will accept Buddhism ought to have it; races that Islam suits should be left with Islam. If certain parts of mankind find Christianity better for them than other faiths, let them have it and prize it, but let them respect the evolution which has not only given it to them, but supplied other peoples with other religions. This is one of the views that have been suggested by the evolutionary doctrine, and there can be no doubt that as an underlying thought this idea has had its influence upon the modern Christian world, to the weakening of the missionary impulse. The Christian teaching must ultimately banish this fatalistic thought, but meanwhile it is here to wield its influence.

At the same time, under the influences of the new age, the church of Christ is itself undergoing a transformation of which it is but slightly aware. It is aware of change, but not of its full greatness and

significance. The Christian world, as we are wont to call it, is nothing else than a part of mankind, and is subject to the influences that affect mankind. If it could escape them, its power upon mankind would be gone. The present time is probably the greatest time of swift transition and transformation that mankind has ever entered upon; and the Christian part of humanity is placed where the process is sharpest and the change is most profound. Hence it is entirely impossible for the Christian world to remain unaltered through the present time, or to keep unchanged the mental and spiritual possessions with which it entered the period of transition. Whether changes are welcome or not does not matter, — they come, and they must come. It would seem probable beforehand that some of them would be for the better and some for the worse; but they are bound to occur, and God's providential way of progress leads through them, to what may be beyond.

In accordance with this all-surrounding fact of the age, we are not surprised to find that the spiritual life and activity of the Christian people are passing in great measure from old forms to new. Methods of religious influence that were effective when dominant ideas in common life were different, are not working now with their former power. What



was strong with previous generations is comparatively weak with the present race. Old appeals do not take hold of men as once they did. Of course the change is not instantaneous, or complete at once; and, according to a gracious law of nature, things that are old and familiar have a power that they do not quickly lose, and a power that now and again asserts itself, to the surprise of innovators. Yet we cannot observe the facts of every day without noticing that Christian life is passing largely out of its old forms and moving on to new. What the new forms are destined to be is not so plain as that the old no longer possess their ancient power; and consequently there is frequent fear among faithful souls that all is going, power as well as forms. It is unbelief to think so, indeed, for God lives, and Christianity has a vitality that cannot die, and new spiritual forms as good as the old will surely come. It is transition, not ruin, that is befalling the Christian faith,—but there is transition. Old organization is not trusted as it used to be, old motives are modified by the appeal of new facts, old doctrines are seeking to find their right place amid newly found realities. Now we know that a time of transition is never a time of conspicuous immediate power. When the old has been weakened and the new has

not yet put on its strength, power is not the mark of the time. Such times pass, but they first come, and one of them is upon us now. It is nothing to be wondered at if in such a period of transition the missionary impulse has met a momentary pause. How could it be otherwise? The missionary motive is one of the motives that have come over from a time when dominant modes of thinking were different from what they can be now. It is a motive, too, that received strong influence from the dominant ideas of the earlier time. It is quite inevitable that this motive, as well as others, should require reconsideration in the light of newly known facts, and adjustment to the elements of a new world.

All the time, of course, the steady though changeful force of the worldly mind and the unspiritual life in Christian people has to be reckoned with as an element in the missionary problem. This enemy of effectiveness is changeful in its manifestations, but steady in its presence and its energy. It is always with us, this haunting disposition to act upon something inferior to the mind of Christ. The church has never risen to the spirit of its Lord, but has always had lingering within it the spirit of selfishness, of pride, of self-indulgence and luxury, of un-

brotherly indifference to others' needs, of spiritual indolence, of keen interest in things that perish with the using. The common sinfulness of man abides, and maturity in Christian character has not yet been attained. The genuine missionary spirit requires deep fellowship with Christ in unselfishness and love. All selfishness is its enemy, and so is all unspiritual life. The present age, with its devotion to pursuits that belong to the present life, and its vast wealth of temporal possessions, is under special temptation to that unspiritual and worldly living which has little in common with the missionary spirit. In the present busy period, full of urgent material interests, this depressing force is exceedingly powerful, and the missionary impulse suffers in consequence. It is partly through the imperfection of the Christian people, and partly through their fault, that the crisis in missions is upon us ; while yet in other respects we plainly see that without any one's fault such a crisis was inevitable in such a time as this.

The events amid which the nineteenth century is closing are to be counted among the influences that are unfavorable to the missionary movement. The moment is in many respects a surprising one, deeply unlike all that we desired or dreamed. The century

that is closing has been, beyond all others in the history of mankind, the century of swiftly growing world-consciousness. The human race has been drawn together. Nations have had more and more to do with one another. Mutual dependence has increased, and has been felt as it could never be felt before. The sense of unity has begun to appear and be influential. In fact, at the present hour mankind comes nearer to being conscious of itself than it has been at any other hour of its history. The consciousness is still very far from being complete, or even true as far as it goes; and yet it exists, in a depth and fulness before unparalleled.

There seemed to be some promise, a little while ago, that this consciousness might, in the more enlightened parts of mankind, become a conscience, and humanity might pass into a new Christian century in a somewhat serious mood of self-judgment and worthy aspiration. It would have been a noble thing, pleasing to God and full of hope, if the century-point had brought a solemn hour of repentance and spiritual uplifting to some considerable part of the human race. But influences of another kind have been effective, and the century is ending with humanity in another mood. It is an hour of

passion. The warlike spirit has been awakened, racial antagonisms have sprung into fresh life, national ambitions have assumed new force, and alarming possibilities of world-wide strife have been opened to humanity. Mankind has entered one of its periods of passion and unrest.

The temper of mankind to-day concerns us here only as it affects the missionary work and its prospects. It needs no proof that the spirit of war is most intensely hostile to the spirit of missions. It is the direct opposite of the missionary spirit, and can only injure it. The missionary feeling toward the human world is a feeling of its unity, and its destiny to be delivered by Christ from strife and bound fast in the bonds of brotherly fellowship. All bitter and divisive passions are hostile to the missionary spirit. All race-antagonisms work in the wrong direction. All alienating influences operate against this Christ-like endeavor after a pure and holy fellowship. We preach Christ, and Christ reveals God, and God is love. Unity, friendliness, mutual help, brotherly oneness in heart and life, these are the watchwords of that Christianity which we offer to mankind. Whatever harms love harms missions. Hence it is perfectly plain that the warlike spirit, if it takes possession of a people and animates their thought



and feeling, is distinctly fatal to the missionary motive. The breaking of the race into warring groups, or groups pledged to the spirit and aim of war, is ruinous to the missionary work. The war-feeling toward men and the missionary feeling toward men are opposite and incompatible, just so far as they are active and strong. And so we are compelled to say that the recent awakening of the warlike spirit must be counted among the influences that perpetuate the present crisis in missions and threaten to perpetuate it far into the coming century. The present atmosphere of the world is not inspiring to missionary zeal: it is too full of something opposite. It is very true that mission-fields have often been opened by means of war, and that they may be again; but it is equally true that by means of wars mission-fields may be closed, and present possibilities may be cut off. But whatever special results may be, it is a very simple axiom, which no one who knows the Lord Jesus ought to doubt, that the spirit of war is contrary to the spirit of missions. And just now, at the end of the century, the spirit of war is asserting itself again, in nations that call themselves Christian, and reclaiming the place which Christ denies it, among the working motives in the common life of humanity.

We need not wonder that there is a crisis in the affairs of missions. The Christian church, always imperfect and liable to the worldly temptations, is a part of humanity, which is passing through a period of great transition. The force of old motives has been diminished by the entrance of revolutionary ideas, and new knowledge of the world has revealed in the missionary enterprise an unsuspected vastness and difficulty. Life, meanwhile, is more exciting and fascinating than ever, and to all the rest there is added an awakening of the passions of war. The actual difficulties of the work are increased in our day, while the impulse to perform it is diminished. And it does not appear possible to claim that the crisis is a momentary one, brief and soon to pass. It will pass, but not in a day. Only in the long periods of God can it seem a momentary crisis: to us men in our present condition it will seem long. It will not wholly pass till the Christian people work their way through it to better ground. The missionary work is waiting to be domesticated in the new age, and new adjustments in Christian thought and life must be established before the crisis will be wholly over. It is the part of common wisdom to look these facts in the face, and take account of their significance, and consider what the next duty is.

## IX

### THE NEXT NEEDS IN MISSIONS

SOME things that are indispensable in missions are always indispensable, and some of the needs, therefore, know no times and seasons. In general terms we may state the abiding and unalterable necessities; and yet even these perpetual needs, as soon as they come to be looked upon specifically for practical use, are found to vary with conditions, so as to be really different at different times. It is only when we are talking in the large that we can speak of the needs in missions as unvarying. For the purposes of actual life, the needs of to-day are never exactly the same as the needs of yesterday.

The crisis that we have been considering brings its own suggestions of necessity. There has come a visible pause in missionary interest, — not a cessation, indeed, and yet a real diminishing of the impulse. Of course this calls us to stop and think about it; and our thoughts must go in both directions. We must search out the causes of the change, and then we must inquire what is the next thing to be done

or sought, in order to the coming of better times for the work that we love. When we come to this latter inquiry, we shall be sadly wrong if we content ourselves with talking in general terms about those supplies of grace and habits of godliness which are always needed. We must pass beyond the familiar phrases. The present crisis is sharp and serious, and like all crises it is special, consisting in specific effects from actual causes; hence it brings its special problems and demands.

The conditions considered in the preceding chapter are mainly unprecedented, and the next needs in missions are the needs that spring out of them. Concerning these it is the urgent duty of the church of to-day to inquire. Our question is, therefore, What are the needs in missions that follow from the present crisis? It is not probable that any one man's answer to this question will be complete, or so true as to be beyond just criticism. Yet there are some needs so central to the present missionary problem as to force themselves upon our attention.

1. The first of the immediate needs in missions is the requickening of faith in the living God and Saviour.

This may seem to be one of those perpetual neces-

sities of which it is superfluous to speak in particular, and hard to speak except in platitudes. But it is not so. It is a perpetual necessity, but the need is specialized just now. One great effect of the conditions that have made the crisis is the wide-spread weakening of direct and simple confidence in the living God who is Saviour to mankind. The loss is not universal, for there are some whose faith in God is clearer, simpler, and more inspiring than ever before. But we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that a simple, available, instinctive, working confidence in God the Saviour is not as effective in the mass of Christians now as it was in those who started the modern work of missions.

For this there are many reasons. One is that the simplicity of faith and the directness of motive have become complicated with the presence of the great multitude of ideas that is upon us now. An age of so many thoughts is an age of less directness and simplicity. Moreover, modern thought is full of inquiry about God. It seeks for solid truth and will have nothing else, and hence is everywhere inquiring. Consequently some familiar thoughts about God have been discredited, while others are established in a new richness which requires time and experience in order to be apprehended in its full glory. In some



minds the thought of God has grown unreal in old forms, only to gain fresh reality in new. In some it has grown unreal altogether, and in others there has risen a great fear lest it should grow unreal. Since some adventurous thinkers have lost their faith in part, there has come to many cautious minds the dread suggestion that faith can be lost; wherefore these have clung to their faith in God with a grasp which seems to them a grasp of confidence, but which has in it really a large element of uncertainty and doubt. By all these processes, concerning which much more might be said, faith has been weakened, and it has come to pass that the calm, direct, unquestioning confidence concerning God, in the strength of which the best of our fathers initiated the missionary work, is not present in the same fulness with their children. Never indeed was such confidence perfect, and never has it attained to such fulness as the gospel of Jesus Christ renders possible. Better possibilities are before us still. But the general effect of the transformations of the passing time has been to diminish rather than to increase the sense of God, with a great part of the Christian people who need it for their work.

Therefore there is need of a great requickening of faith. The faith in God that is needed in the church

for the purposes of the missionary work is not an elaborate thing, made up of many elements; it is a simple, direct, effective sense of the reality of God as a living person and power, whose heart, revealed in Christ, is the heart of a Saviour to mankind. The modern missionary endeavor was begun under the impulse of such a faith. To the leaders in that work it was simply a fact that God lives, that man needs his grace, and that his grace is available. This was among the assumptions of life. The conviction concerning it was not so much a reasoned and established conviction, as it was an unquestioning certainty. The pioneers of the missionary work had hearts and minds occupied by this certainty, or they could scarcely have committed themselves to action on the strength of it as they did. The vigor of the missionary endeavor depends upon the continuance of such a sense of the reality of God and his saving grace. If it droops, it must be revived. The work may be continued long in spite of decline of faith, but loss of the living sense of God and of the instinctive certainty concerning him, means loss of force for the work, loss of directness in effort, and loss of quality in the result. If we are now in a period of hesitancy, of questioning, and of comparatively inefficient faith concerning God and his saving grace for the world,

the interests of missions require that somehow we come through this period, into a time when the living God who is Saviour to the world in Christ is so real that we are ready to act in view of him, as promptly and joyously as ever our fathers did. The ideal manner for missionary service, indeed, is nothing else than the manner in which our Master Christ himself took God and saving grace for granted, and lived and died without a question, for the accomplishment of the divine will for the salvation of the world.

To some this may seem like empty talk, and to others hopeless. If the requickening of faith is indispensable to missions, they may think, missions are doomed. The simple faith of our fathers is exactly what we cannot get. Changes have swept over us, new thoughts have come in, a new world has been entered. One result is that the faith in which missions were inaugurated is gone; and it is the very essence of change that it never returns upon its course. Something else we may have, but what has been left behind in passing from one world to another we can never have again. Some may talk thus in a tone of superiority, glad that the faith of a childish period is no more; some may say it apprehensively and with regret, or in an agony of fear lest faith

should not come back. How is it? Can we, or can we not, hereafter have that simple faith in the living God and his saving grace in Christ without which missions cannot prosper? Is the great requickening that we need possible, or impossible?

The requickening is possible. The world has not passed, in its great transition, out of the region where the human heart can obtain a simple, direct, working faith in God and his saving grace in Christ. Those who claim that it has, and those who fear that it has, are alike misjudging the facts. There must, of course, be changes in the conception of God upon which faith takes hold, for thought and love and life have been busy with the conception of God meanwhile, and not in vain; but they need not be changes for the poorer or the less divine, — rather may they be changes for the simpler, the richer, and the more Christlike. It does not follow, because our fathers had a living faith that led them out to brave self-sacrifice, that their knowledge of God was such as to admit of no advance, or that their conception of him left nothing to be desired by us. Under his own leading we may perhaps gain some new thoughts of him for which they might well have been thankful. The truth is that a conception of God in Christ may be attained, in the light of which

it will be even more natural than before for a Christian heart to act unquestioningly in faith upon him. This is the thing that is coming to pass. Into this God is leading his children, through that great transition of which so many of them are afraid. A vast world of new thoughts and new knowledge is opening upon us, but in that world we are to know a God in whom we can have a faith as simple, direct, and childlike as any faith of our fathers has been, and even more full, we hope, of Christlike quality and power. To doubt this is to doubt God. If in a larger world of truer knowledge we cannot so find our God as to walk by faith in him, then he is not the God that we thought him to be, the God of all. In the new world into which he is bringing us we can believe in God with even a better faith than was ever known before.

Not in a day, however, can the better faith arise in power. Transitions are trying, and they take longer than we think they ought. Some time may pass before the Christian people attain in the new period to a strong unquestioning recognition of God and his grace. Some Christians now living do not expect it or think it possible, for they look only for decline toward the end of the age. Some think the nature of the new knowledge renders the requickening of



faith impossible, except to those who forswear the knowledge. Many will only gradually overcome their fear of the new age into which God is leading us. Adequate recognition of God is not the earliest thought in any age of real activity, and it cannot come in full at once. But it can come, and come it will. The age of evolutionary thought is destined to include among its forces a simple and powerful faith in the living God, when once spiritual truth has had opportunity to take its hold. If the process requires time, not the less sure is it. It is the great need of missions that the requickening of faith should come; therefore it is the first need and duty of the Christian people to perceive that it can come, and expect that it will come. We shall hasten it if we believe in it and delay it if we doubt it.

2. The second of the immediate needs in missions, closely associated with the first, is, the establishing of the missionary motive among the vital thoughts of the modern age.

Here it is assumed that we are passing, or have passed, into a modern age that differs in important respects from the period before it. On all sides this is granted to be true. All recognize the new time. But concerning the relation of the new time to mis-

sions and the motive from which they spring, there are various judgments. "We are entering a new age," says one, "in which it will prove that the missionary motive with all its works has been left behind and is forgotten. The new age has no place for the missionary impulse. The evolutionary thought dooms it, and the world will be the better for the doom." "We are entering a new age," says another who believes in missions and desires to see them perpetuated, "but it is an age which in itself can develop no missionary motive and entertain none. No missionary impulse will be at home in it. But the work must go on, and therefore we must bring over the missionary motive of our older world, unchanged and solid, and maintain it as an alien divine element in an age that cannot care for it. This we must do or there will be no hope." "We are entering a new age," says yet another. "The new age will have its own vital thoughts, which alone, like the vital thoughts of any age, will have real power with it. Among the vital thoughts of the modern age there is a natural and worthy place for the Christian missionary motive; and this motive must be established among them, as a living force that belongs there and is at home. Missions must be planted in among the things that the new age owns and will maintain."

This last expression best represents the relation of the missionary motive to the modern age. The Christian people should entertain no idea of allowing the modern age to drop the missionary motive from among its vital thoughts. To admit that the missionary motive does not belong among the vital thoughts of the age upon which we are entering is feebleness itself, — it is unbelief, it is atheism. The modern age with its characteristic thoughts has room legitimately for the missionary motive. Missions do not belong alone to the period that is retiring into the past: they belong just as much to the period that is opening now. A time will soon have come when Christians are influenced far more than they have yet been by the thoughts that belong to the evolutionary system. Will that be a missionary time? it will; and it is a needful work of the present day to claim that it will be a missionary time, and to help make it such, by bringing in the missionary motive to its place among the thoughts that will be vital in that coming day.

There is no friend of missions who supposes that the missionary work is destined to stop. But all must see that if it is not to stop, it must be continued in the new period, which is extremely unlike the old. The specifications of difference between the old period and the new are most impressive, and some of

them must be mentioned. The missions that are now in hand were begun when the peoples to whom they were sent were practically unknown. They must be continued when those peoples are abundantly described to us in books, when some of them are familiar to our eyes, and when many of them are closely bound to us in political and commercial relations. Missions were begun when the religions of the world were as unknown as the peoples; they were popularly classed together as simply false, and were regarded as fruits of evil, and productive of nothing but evil to mankind. Missions are to be continued when the religions of the world have been scientifically examined, when they are regarded as true products of the religious nature of man, when it is held that they have done good in their day as well as harm, and when the popular tendency is not to pity them, but to estimate them too highly. Missions were begun when it was believed that man was a creature unconnected with all other creatures in the world, who had existed on the earth only six thousand years. They must be continued when it is held that man is a genuine part of the animal order, created by God by processes and not by fiat, that he has been on the earth for ages, and that he has in himself an inheritance as old as life

itself. Missions were begun when it was held that the entire human race, created sinless, was morally ruined through the fall of Adam, from whom all the living inherited both depravity and condemnation. They must be continued when it is widely held that mankind, developed from below, is naturally a slowly-rising race, but is burdened, for the purposes of its own spiritual being, with a vast inheritance from the animal world, which passes over mysteriously but really into sin, for which the individual has blame. Missions were begun when it was believed that God regarded men primarily as subject to his law and liable to his righteous judgment. They must be continued when it is widely believed that God regards man primarily as subject to his training and open to his influence, and life is considered a school rather than a scene of probation. Missions were begun when it was believed that all who had never heard of Christ were passing, from the moment of their death, to an absolutely hopeless doom. They must be continued when this ancient belief has lost its power. Missions must be continued, moreover, not only in a period when these later views and others like them are held, but when it seems certain to those who have received them that they are grounded in sound knowledge, and cannot be abandoned.



These are facts which it is wise for all friends of missions to consider, and shortsighted for them to overlook. They ought to be considered, simply because they are facts. Some readers may deem it unwise and even dangerous to call attention to them. But certainly Christian missions have to be continued in a world of ideas different from that in which they began. No matter whether we accept these later ideas, or reject them, or hold our minds in suspense about them, the fact remains that our missionary work must be carried on in a world that is profoundly influenced by them. It follows that if missions are to be continued with energy and zest, the motive to prosecute them must be established among the vital thoughts of the age that is influenced by these views. Surely no Christian will maintain that missionary interest is henceforth to be possible only to those who reject the incoming ideas. To maintain that would be to put Christianity in the past, and resign for it the mastership of the world. The thoughts of the modern age have come to stay, and if missions cannot live with them, missions can have only a languishing life in the future. The missionary motive needs to be so formed that Christians who live in the thought of the new age shall entertain it enthusiastically, and be impelled by it to action, as their fathers

were. If this does not occur, the endeavor to make Christianity the religion of the world will droop, and finally cease. We cannot see too clearly that missions are doomed unless they can live with the new thought.

Of course the urgent question is whether the missionary motive can thus be established among the vital thoughts of the coming day. There are plenty of modern men who think the coming age has no place for the missionary motive, and there are plenty of Christians from the older time who agree with them. But the word of truth and faith is that the Christian missionary motive belongs by right among the vital thoughts of the new time, and can be established there. The future will prove it to be so; and the present need is that the Christian people rise to the vision of the truth in the case, and claim the missionary impulse as a genuine part of the modern life.

A few words must be given to showing how the missionary motive comes in among the vital thoughts of the modern age. Only the briefest hint can be given, but it may be useful to offer even this.

That fatalistic outcome of belief in evolution, mentioned in the preceding chapter, according to which each religion is judged to be the best for those who

have it, is not the true and lasting outcome. In fact it is radically untenable on evolutionary grounds. It is by no means true that the unfolding course of the world always brings forth the thing that ought to remain. Evolution in fact brings nothing to stay: all that it brings is destined to pass into something else, as spring passes into summer. In this forward movement man may help and guide. Every man knows this, for every man seeks to better his own condition, though evolution brought him to it. Much of the most intelligent and useful work of our day for the improvement of the lot of the unfortunate is undertaken on the principle that it is the duty and privilege of man to take hold with the universal order and direct his own evolution. This is the function of human intelligence, a gift conferred in vain, one may almost say, unless it were thus employed. The high powers of man—intelligence, affection, moral judgment, will—find their right use in the work of ministering to the upward movement that is normal to humanity. This helpful work is to be done not solely by the individual for himself; it must be done by each and by the many, for the good of all. Service to the race is the proper work of the race. The ideal in human evolution is a state in which the best heart and mind and will that the race possesses

shall be faithfully and patiently devoted to the raising of the whole race to its best possibilities. Thus the missionary idea belongs to evolution.

One who perceives this but does not take an interest in religion may offer help to humanity in other fields of life. But a Christian who has learned this moral lesson of evolution will say that the great possession which above all others ought to be handed on to those who are without it is the knowledge and experience of the living God. Through Christ, and in Christianity, we know the living and true God, the God who exists, the only God who exists or ever can exist. He is the God of all who live or can ever live. Through Christ we know his character, and have learned that he is a holy being, and a friend. He is a Saviour to mankind. He is love, and has acted out his love in that mission of Christ whereby salvation from sin has become a glorious possession to men. Yet he is no soft and unexacting lover; he is a firm and holy Lord, giving his gifts as alone they can be given, in connection with conformity to his own necessary demands. There is no way home to him except through the establishment of moral fellowship; but in Christ he forgives, in Christ he renews the heart and life, in Christ he establishes the moral fellowship. In Christ he saves, renovates, trans-

forms, both the individual soul and the life that men live together. He is Saviour both for men and for man, for the individual and for the race.

This is the best in religion that has ever been known among men. Only compare it with the religions under which the nations are living, religions defective exactly in this, the knowledge of the true and living God the Saviour. It is the best in religion that men are destined to have; for nothing simpler, loftier or more fundamental in religion is possible than this which is given us in Christ, — only we need to see completely how simple, how independent and how necessarily true this gospel of God the Saviour really is. To impart such a gift to all mankind is the duty of all who possess it; and this duty is enforced alike by the command of Christ, and by the relations that are brought to light through the doctrine of evolution.

To claim this place for the missionary motive is not by any means to withdraw it from its old position in relation to Christ and his authority. It holds its old place, and it has its new. What Christ teaches is universal truth, adapted to all stages of human intelligence. The holy missionary motive that he has inculcated is a motive of universal and everlasting fitness, as long as men are men and a part of them



know God. The present necessity is that this universal right and sway of the missionary motive be discerned by the Christian people, and that the impulse which has been so powerful and beneficent in the old relations be introduced to a career of equal power and beneficence in the new relations that are coming on.

3. The third of the immediate needs in missions is the simplifying of the Christian message, by distinguishing what is central from what is not.

The central Christian message which we deliver in missions is that which has just now been spoken of. It consists in that which Christianity alone possesses. The central Christian message is, that there is one only God, whom we know in Christ; that he is the holy One, who hates our sins while he loves our souls; that he desires to make us right and fill us with all true blessing; that in Christ he has expressed himself, and brought his saving goodness near to bless us; that he forgives our sins and wakens in us a holy inward life; that he is the healer of our evil, the comforter of our sorrows and the inspiration of all goodness; that to know him and to love him is to find peace to our souls and strength for all virtue; that for time and eternity the true acquaintance with God

through Jesus Christ is the supreme good; and that his goodness is the revolutionary power for blessing to all the world. Here we offer the forgiveness of sins, the consoling of troubles, the transformation of the soul, the uplifting of life to heavenly ranges, the blighting of evil, the practical every-day inspiration of common virtue; and we offer it all not in theory but in actual Christian experience, which makes us acquainted with God as Christ reveals him. This is the central Christian message.

We offer this message as one that is confirmed and authenticated by experience. "Come, taste and see that the Lord is good," is the call of Christendom to the world. We offer what the universal Christian experience has found true, and what we have experienced ourselves; and we challenge all who hear to put our tidings to the one test of truth which is available to all. If they will fairly test it, we assure them, they will find it true. Christ died for us, we tell them, and he died for you. Christ has won our hearts, and he can win yours. This good news has been to us God's power unto salvation, and so it will be to you. God will evidence himself to the soul that trusts him and to the people that will obey him. That God is good enough to do all things for us, and that moral fellowship with him is our one hope, —

this is what we declare, and this we invite all hearers to test by experience. And meanwhile, before they have gotten far enough to test it, we urge our message upon them in the name of God who sent us to them, and in the name of our message itself, which surpasses all other messages in fine, deep-reaching, self-evidencing power. The living God in the message appeals to the living man who was made for God.

Between this single evangelical message and much that stands associated with it there is a radical difference. As soon as we have felt the power of this gospel of God, we see at once that nothing else can rank as equal to it. This is the unique word of life. What we offer is so truly a word of life that we can scarcely help wishing it did not need to bear a special name, as Christianity, or be called a religion. What we bear to men in missions is God's great presentation of himself to them as their holy Saviour-friend for whom they were created and in whom alone they can rightly live. Nothing else can rank with this. All incidental and surrounding matters ought to be presented as incidental and surrounding, and this ought to be kept in solitary glory and tenderness, as the central Christian message, which forces all else toward the circumference.

Yet it proves to be the fact that in our missions we feel ourselves required to present Christianity. We present it as a system. We present all that we regard as belonging to it. This may be less or more in amount, but it probably includes a good deal besides the central message. Sometimes it includes the entire substance of the Biblical narrative, all being read as one divine declaration, whether it be the goodness of God and his self-revealing to us, or the events in the history of the patriarchs and of Israel. We offer the whole book as a part of Christianity, and insist that Christianity is dependent upon the acceptance of the entire substance of the book. Very often, perhaps usually, in missions, it is taught as a part of Christianity that the earth was created in six days, and that man was formed out of the dust of the ground and woman was made from a rib of man. We do not offer the entire Biblical narrative as equally important with the tidings of the eternal goodness, but we do convey the impression that the two elements are so bound up together that we shall lose the central message if we do not hold the narrative. Along with the words of eternal life that Jesus brought, we carry a body of ancient history, with a thousand details that do not touch eternal life, and declare that the whole must be taken to-

gether or the words of life will slip away. Thus do we lay burdens on the gospel, and on those to whom we preach it. And, on another side of the subject, it is common for special doctrines to be presented as a part of Christianity, and indeed for the whole system of doctrine to be so presented. It is sometimes held that Christianity is a system of doctrines, or at least can be adequately represented by its doctrines. Our theories and explanations of things, our solutions of the divine mysteries, are wrought in with our message as if they essentially belonged to it. Our creeds provide us with a large element in our message, and we offer the nations a Calvinistic or an Arminian interpretation of the grace of God, making this the gospel that we give them. Thus on the one hand we make the central message dependent upon our theory of what the Bible is, and on the other we attach to it our systems of doctrine, and even of philosophy. Doubtless this statement is too strong, for our hearts are better than our heads, and we do preach the gospel of Christ in its simplicity; yet when we come to complete our doctrine, and tell our converts what as Christians they are to hold, we do not keep our central message distinct in its glory, but bind in with it our views of inspiration and of doctrine, and probably even of church polity.



One resulting difficulty we may pass in few words, though it is a serious one in practice. Christianity is sometimes put in the wrong. Our converts meet, as they already do in Japan, the scientific denial of the doctrine that the earth was created in six days, but are expected as Christians to maintain the doctrine that science thus denies. An untenable position has been taken in the name of Christianity, and all the inevitable consequences follow. Christian teaching is justly discredited, and our converts are exposed to perplexities and embarrassments that we ought to have rendered impossible to them. We have no right to bind in as a part of Christianity the belief that the earth was created in six days, or belief in the perfect accuracy of the entire Bible. Nor have we a right to bind in as a part of Christianity disputed matters in doctrine and philosophy. Some means ought to be found to prevent the taking of untenable positions in our missionary teaching and to keep the experimental evangelical message distinct from doctrinal interpretations.

But the real difficulty that follows from presenting too much as Christianity goes deeper. It resides in the intrinsic difference in things. Nothing else ranks with the high tidings of God in Christ. This great message is so distinct that it ought to be kept dis-

tinged. No such matter as the time or manner of creation, or the history of Israel, has any right to be wrapped up with it. The Biblical narrative tells us much about the manifestation of God to men, but the narrative and the manifestation are two things, not on the same level. To present the gospel of God in Christ as dependent upon the accuracy of the Biblical record, or as bound up with the reception of all that the Bible contains, is to place the pyramid upon its apex. God, God in Christ, life for man in God through Christ, love and trust toward the good God, loyalty to the eternal goodness, hope in what the eternal goodness will do for us sinful and needy men, — these are the great Christian realities, and they deserve to be presented in their own inherent strength, uncomplicated with any matters inferior to them. And when we come, beyond all incidentals, to these realities themselves, it is not in the Calvinistic or the Arminian form of them that their virtue dwells, and it is not by the systematic exposition of them that their vital power is brought forth. We overestimate the intellect in religion, and rely upon it for what only the heart can do. It is through faith that men are to be saved, and we must learn to present the real gospel in such manner that it shall appeal with power to that capacity for trust which God has im-

planted in the human soul. That we should learn to do this is one of the immediate needs in our missionary work. We must make more of our central message, by distinguishing it from matters that do not rank with it. We must learn to be content with preaching the simple gospel, and keep the central gospel by itself.

The fact that delicate and difficult questions attend upon the right action in this matter does not make our duty less plain or urgent. The questions are coming in any case, and the right action is the only way to prepare for them. The current discussions about the Bible cannot be kept from the mission-fields. Some day it will become known that the Bible is being studied upon a method that was unknown to the fathers, but which is certainly a right method. It will be known that new conclusions about the Bible have resulted from this modern study; it will be learned, too, that while some of the conclusions may be corrected by further study, the method itself has come to stay, and study of the Bible must hereafter be conducted under its influence. Under its influence the Bible, instead of being spoiled as some fear it may be, becomes more intelligible than before. Knowledge of these facts has already reached the mission-field in Japan, and will some day enter all

the fields. When that day comes, it is to be desired that the central message of the gospel may be found standing on independent grounds, sufficiently supported by its own inherent excellence. But it will not be so, unless the missionaries make it so. It is possible for missionaries to prepare for their converts a day of deep trouble by holding a reactionary attitude, and teaching them that the new methods are inconsistent with the Christian faith. In the current bitter condemnation of the higher criticism may be heard the muttering of a coming storm for the mission-fields. The only way of safety and strength is to keep the central message by itself, proclaim the gospel of the grace of God, and leave to study the matters that study must determine. The gospel of grace is eternal and immovable, because God is God.

4. The fourth of the immediate needs in missions is the loyal and intelligent adoption by the Christian people of the long and exacting work of making Christianity the religion of the world.

Here is required a change, and almost a revolution, in the attitude of the Christian people. But it is only the change that common wisdom calls for. The demand springs immediately from the nature of the

work. The missionary enterprise is a vast one, as we have seen already. It endeavors to plant the Christian faith as the faith and life-principle of the human race. Even the words that tell of such a work are almost overwhelming; how much more the vision of the task itself! The enterprise demands long time; and if much is to be done there must be adequate comprehension of the nature of the undertaking, and great variety in methods of work, and ready adaptation to conditions as they arise, and inexhaustible patience. Since we, the Christian people, are committed to such an enterprise as this, it is only the demand of common sense that we settle down deliberately to the work, intelligently expecting a long pull, and planning to give it our best strength for an indefinite time to come. Missionaries on the field should take this view of their work, and the church at home should frankly and patiently accept it, with all that it implies.

The change that is thus required implies the passing of the romantic feeling about missions, with the practices that it has suggested, and the coming of a larger and maturer idea in its place. The romantic period had to come, as we have said, but it could not last, for it was founded in misconception. It had not then been taken to heart that the work of mis-



sions is the longest, hardest, most exacting work that was ever undertaken by man. In proportion as this is learned, the methods of the romantic period will pass away.

At present there survives from that earlier time a feeling that brings in a large sensational element to our missionary interest. We like the pictorial. We want stories of heathen degradation, or else of swift success, to keep our interest up. We plead for quick returns from labor to encourage us, and are cast down if they are wanting. Givers must have personal reports, and immediate communication with missionaries on the field, or their interest may droop. They must know just where their money goes, and be sure that it is spent in work that they take an interest in. Donations must be made specific, not general, so as to gratify the preferences of donors. Churches must be visited by representatives of the cause, or they will forget and their contributions will drop off. Contributions must be publicly reported, not in the interest of sound book-keeping but lest givers should think they were overlooked. Thus various motives must be appealed to, and various interests conciliated, apart from the real merits and demands of the work itself. It is necessary that the church learn that all this belongs to the childish period and is to be out-

grown. That it does belong to the childish period is plain as soon as the real nature of the work is seen. The pressing need at present is that the childish period may pass, and the Christian people may address themselves to missions for their own sake, intelligently purposing to prosecute the work with full strength, with or without special encouragements, till it is finished.

To say this is not to disparage the value of interesting reports, or the inspiration of swift success, or the advantage of having personal connection with the field. All these things are good, and should be used for the good that there is in them. We shall always have them, too: there will always be enough of these good gifts to serve finely for the refreshing of missionary interest. But if these are the main reliance, only a weak and fitful interest can be maintained. Something stronger and steadier is needed. A great work requires a great purpose. If missions are to be worthily conducted, the childish period must pass, and the steady work of maturity must be undertaken. The Christian people must adopt the work well knowing what it is, and consenting to the strain upon their faith and patience which it involves. They must accept it with a consecration that neither depends on small encouragements nor heeds small discourage-

ments, and holds on its way because it has set forth intelligently, knowing what the undertaking means.

One of the encouraging facts apparent in the Ecumenical Missionary Conference of 1900 was the evident growth of the conviction that the missionary work is a great practical enterprise, which requires the application of Christian faith and sound business principles in equal measure. It was not represented that the work could prosper without faith and prayer and reliance upon God, and no more was it imagined that the work could prosper without sound business methods, and skill in administration, and versatility in operation, and such dogged persistency as great enterprises always require. It was apparent that the missionary enterprise was beginning to take an acknowledged place among those large works that require generalship and patience and comprehensive wisdom. No more encouraging fact than this did the great Conference present. By the exhibition of this quality of common sense, the missionary enterprise commended itself to sound judgment and became more satisfactory to reasonable men; and we cannot doubt that by the same fact the work of his children became more pleasing to God.

The managers of the great missionary societies are compelled to act upon this principle, less or more.

They are obliged to look ahead, to lay foundations for the future, to sow seed that will be long in coming up. They cannot avoid this duty. If they do not deliberately plan for a long work, and conduct it on sound practical principles, and invest the present for the sake of the future, the defective quality of their work will soon reveal and punish their mistake. They are compelled into the field of business and statesmanship by the very conditions that they encounter. But alas for the loneliness of the leaders who are compelled to take large views and brave large work! The people on whom they are dependent for supplies are slow to learn the lesson. There is nothing surprising about it, but the fact is not less important because it is natural. The leaders ought to understand the problem better than the mass; but when will the people intelligently accept the long and arduous task? Missionary administrators would almost consider their problems solved and their way wide open, if the people in whose name they are working should rise to the large view of things, and really take the missionary work to heart as a task on which they will gladly and patiently labor till it is done. If the Christian people should intelligently settle down to the real work of missions, long plans could be laid, deficiencies in the treasury would be

no more, opportunities could be seized, and the work could be done worthily of him whose name it bears.

These are the present needs in missions: — the re-quickening of faith in the living God and Saviour, the establishing of the missionary motive among the vital thoughts of the modern age, the simplifying of the Christian message, and the adoption of the long and arduous work by the Christian people. There may be other needs, but if these were met the way of the Lord would be prepared.



## X

### THE OUTLOOK IN MISSIONS

THAT the outlook in missions is the outlook of a long and difficult work requiring steady and patient effort is a fact that has been abundantly reiterated on these pages, but not beyond the truth. The task of planting Christianity is a great and arduous task. Success consists in nothing less than Christ's conquest of the general life of man. In the lands to which we go, men must be led to know God in Christ and to trust and love him for themselves; converts must become numerous, holy and influential enough to constitute a transforming force in the life of their country; through this native force the Spirit of God must work upon the thought, feeling, and living of the people; ancient beliefs and institutions must be conquered by the spirit of Christ and give way to the fruits of Christianity; the characteristic energy of Christ must have free course till the country is made new. All this must be done in uncultured lands, and in countries of ancient and settled order. It cannot be accomplished by any one style of labor; it requires a hundred modes of work. Meanwhile

various fortunes must be encountered. There is no royal road. There will be mistakes to be corrected and work to be repeated. Resistance will take new forms and bring on new conflicts. There will be labor that seems in vain, defeats as well as victories, and disappointments resulting from success. There will be discouragements at home, and new conditions requiring new adjustments. The end is too far off to form an element in present calculations. It is a long outlook.

At the same time, the outlook in missions is the outlook of a divine work, in which God is more than man, and the inspiration of success and hope will never be wanting.

The old declaration that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation is still true, and in this truth lies the hope in missions. God is in it. Through the tidings and living illustration of the divine grace in Christ there goes forth an actual energy of God to make new creatures of men. God the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, is at work with the truth that Christ reveals. We may say that there is a vital and efficacious quality in the gospel, and be right in saying so; but we may go deeper into reality and say that there is a vital and effica-

cious quality in God whom the gospel makes known through Christ. God is his own witness, proving his own presence and power. Missionary annals contain constant proof that God is still reconciling the world to himself in Christ. He has renewed and transformed the life of men, wherever the gospel has gone, and he can do it still. According to the power that is already working in us, God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. This exceedingly abundant power of God is our reliance in missions, and the outlook of missions is the outlook of a work in which this power is active.

There is another element of hope from the divine side, set forth to us by our Lord in one of his parables. He drew a picture of the sower casting in the seed and then going about his daily work and taking his nightly rest, trusting the seed to the forces among which he has placed it. The sower is justified in his confidence. The seed springs up and grows, he knows not how ; for the earth, the Lord says, brings forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. It is a striking parable, and perhaps a surprising one even yet. The Lord certainly teaches by it that there is a true relation of mutual fitness between the seed and the soil into which it is cast. The seed is placed where

growth is the normal thing. Put the seed and the soil together, and something will come of it. By this he doubtless meant to set forth the great and fundamental fact that the truth of God and the soul of man are adapted one to the other. The truth that Christ has brought to our knowledge is the truth for which the human soul in all lands was created, to which it is adapted, and which it is normal for humanity to receive unto salvation. This is what our Lord taught by the parable; and this, as soon as we discern what the substance of his revelation is, we perceive to be true. We are not offering to the men of China or Africa something that is strange to their nature, or something that it would be abnormal for them to accept. We are giving them truth in which alone they can attain to their proper manhood. This great fact constitutes an element in the outlook of missions that should never be forgotten. The divine element in the outlook is found not only in the presence of the life-giving Spirit, glorious as this is: it resides also in the divine adaptation of man to Christ and of Christ to man.

The divine element in the outlook appears yet again in that peculiar quality of the Christian faith whereby it has always been able to renew its own energy when renewal was needed, and thus to rise

to new emergencies. It has often been noticed that Christianity has shown a remarkable power of self-renovation. It has an inherent largeness, by virtue of which it tends to throw off temporary limitations and assert its own equality to its task. When there was new work to be done, Christianity has been ready. If it was needful that more light should break forth from God's holy word, the light was there. If it was necessary that some forgotten truth should be revived and put to new use, often has the Holy Spirit brought such truth to the remembrance of the Christian people. If some new form of Christian thought was needed to meet some newly-developed doubt or inefficiency or error, it has been forthcoming. These gifts of God indeed have always had their envelope of human imperfection, and they have always been in part unrecognized by the Christian people when they came, and even condemned as not from God at all. Yet the outcome has shown that God was with his people, and the Christian faith has still renewed its strength under the inspiration of the indwelling Spirit.

What has been done will still be done. Christianity will renew itself for new times as it has done before, and take such form as effectiveness for God may require. The Christianity of the seventeenth



century did the work of that century, but only the Christianity of the nineteenth could do the work of the nineteenth. So there will be a Christianity of the twentieth century, the same yet not the same, efficient for the work of the time, competent to glorify God in the conditions of its period. So it will be in every century while the work lasts. As the day of Christianity is, so will its strength be. That its strength varies with the days, and rises to meet them, is one secret of its power, and of our hope. The religion of the living God and his grace will look differently to men in different periods, but it will be equal to the work of all.

Yet this divine element in the outlook does not justify in us mere optimism. The facts forbid that. The presence of the divine Spirit of life, the adaptation of the truth to man, and the self-renewing power of Christianity, might seem to warrant hope of progress without drawbacks, and victory won with ease. But the work has to be done in accordance with human nature, both in the heathen who are to be saved and in the Christians through whom God works. This is a world in which no good thing works perfectly. If God is to act in accordance with the nature that he has given us and the order that

he has constituted, there is no way even for him to make the giving of Christ to the world anything but a long work, attended with manifold difficulties and liable to long delays. It has sometimes been said that God could convert all the heathen in a day if he wished. We should be careful about talking so, lest we cast doubt upon God's willingness to bless the souls that he has made. It is certain that working in accordance with the order that he has established in human nature, God could not convert all the heathen in a day, or in a generation. He has undertaken a work that even to him cannot be a short one, or proceed without its delays and inequalities. The divine agent is engaged in a long work, in which we are called to labor with him, — this is the state of the case. The living Spirit is present, the truth is adapted to man, and the gospel has perpetual power; and in a work that is long and hard we have these realities for our encouragement. The divine element justifies hopeful work, not optimistic waiting.

This leads to the question so often asked, just what we are to expect in this world as the final outcome of missions. How much is to be accomplished? How far is the world to be renovated? The inquiry is often pressed down to details. Will Christianity some day be literally everywhere in the

world in fulness and perfection? Will every soul some day be regenerate? Will all life be transformed? Will all human transactions be perfectly governed by the mind of Christ? So we ask, and we are intensely eager to know. Things hidden and unknowable are always fascinating, and nothing is more fascinating than that which the future holds concealed. But clear pictures of the far future in this world have not been drawn for us. The pictures that we thought were in the Bible do not prove to be views of that region, when we examine them more closely. Our own pictures of the far future are only our forecasts of probability or inferences from our knowledge of God, and in these we may not be right. But the true answer to the question about the final outcome in this world is that we do not need an answer. The future we do not need to know. The work that is committed to our hands is God's work, and will be successful. It will be what God himself calls successful. But just what that will mean, and what form such success will take, we cannot know, and we do not need to know. The work is ours, and the result is God's. It is enough for us to know that a long and exacting work of the most inspiring and glorious kind is entrusted to us, in which God is with us and we are to labor with him; that suc-

cesses will crown our work as we go on, and success will crown it at last; and that we can justly be hopeful at every step, and feel our hope brightening as we advance toward the end. Beyond this, no answer to our eager inquiry about the far future is to be obtained.

It is far more to the point for us to inquire how much may reasonably be expected soon. What is a fair forecast? How large results may we look for from year to year? What ought to satisfy us as we go on? What is the actual outlook just now, as we are passing from the nineteenth century into the twentieth? Of course this is a question that involves many others, of which some may be answerable, but some baffle us entirely. We should be very glad if we could know what the true outlook really is, for then we might govern our expectations accordingly, and keep our hopefulness better than if we ignorantly misjudged. We cannot solve the problem very well, but the question may be put in suggestive form, out of which some profitable thought may proceed.

How far does the missionary outlook depend upon what are known as current events? The face of the social and political world is ever changing. Rela-

tions are altered, old possibilities seem to close, and new ones open. Surprises come upon the world, revolutions, catastrophes. The great world moves, and its changes affect all that is in it. How far do these changes, generally speaking, determine the outlook of missionary work?

Of course special and local outlooks may be decisively affected by current events. The world's movement may open new fields, and thus bring invaluable opportunity. It may compel the instant abandonment of certain fields, and close all work upon them, at least for the time. Missionary work in a country or a special place may become suddenly embarrassed and difficult, so that waste of energy is inevitable if it is to be continued; or it may be suddenly set forward in freedom. All this occurs again and again in the course of the long work. Beholders are likely to observe such effects with deep interest, and perhaps to overestimate their importance. The fact is that no one can tell just how much effect upon the real outlook of missions any current events whatever are to have. Nowhere are we more liable to surprises than here, for nowhere are we more likely to compute probabilities from only a part of the facts. We are considering a work in which we have to reckon with invisible powers as



well as visible, divine energies as well as human events and movements. Events may seem decisive, and yet invisible forces may proceed to do what events appear to have forbidden.

Famines interfere with work, and sometimes end it; but famines have sometimes been the means or the occasion of the brightest missionary success. Persecutions have done their characteristic work, which need not be described, and have sometimes seemed to represent the triumphant power. But blood has not been shed in vain, nor have wearying troubles been endured without fruit. Heroism has been a better witness than preaching, and the Christian character, in missionaries and in converts, has been as the face of God among the heathen. Violent opposition may bring its reactions, and what seems fatal to the work may end in promoting it. On the other hand there may be bright and hopeful occurrences that prove disappointing and never yield what they promised. Popular favor may be withdrawn, and free opportunity may close. Openings that looked most promising may prove to have drawbacks that could not be suspected. Yet disappointments themselves may disappoint us, by passing into unexpected means of power.

The fact is that we cannot let current events

alone, but are compelled to watch them with keen interest and study them for their meaning's sake, and yet we shall be wrong if we build very definitely upon our interpretations of them. The missionary work, even with reference to its immediate outlook, is of larger scope than passing events. Unseen elements mysterious and sublime enter into it. For example, the immediate outlook of missionary work in China would seem to be settled by the events that are current when these words are written, in the autumn of 1900, for the missionaries have been driven out, and some have lost their lives. China in fact has been left almost bare of missionary laborers. Yet for how long a time even this outlook is really settled, no one knows; and how far the successes of the next ten years are cut off by these disasters, who can tell? It may seem that all is over, and hostile critics may rejoice; but for aught that we can know, the next decade in China may be the most fruitful for Christ of all the decades yet. God has children there, and they may abundantly glorify his name. The blood of the martyrs may again be the seed of the church. As for these disasters stopping the work of missions in China for all the future, of course that idea enters no Christian heart. China will not be dropped from prayer and effort, and the work of

Christendom will be continued there, until its due result is obtained.

How far does the missionary outlook depend upon a relation between the missionary work and the movements of civilization? We cannot say that what we occidentals call civilization is the only thing that can bear the name; but it is a fact that that form of civilization, attended by scientific knowledge, which has thus far accompanied Christianity is moving upon the non-Christian parts of mankind, seeking to take possession. Simultaneous with this general movement is the missionary movement of Christianity itself. How are the two related to each other? Which is normally the leader? Do our missionary prospects depend upon our having civilization for an advance-guard, or a pioneer, or do they not?

This again is a question that may easily be answered too definitely. There are some who are impressed by the great value of western civilization with its ruling ideas as a preparation for Christianity, and consider it an almost indispensable pioneer. There are others who almost scorn reliance for Christian success upon such agencies, regarding it as a resort to inferior and needless help, if not even as a profanation of sacred powers. Probably neither ex-

treme is right. When we balance the facts that bear upon the question, it seems quite impossible on the ground of experience to call civilization unhelpful to Christianity, and equally impossible to call it indispensable. The ruling ideas of western life, and especially the facts that make up the body of western knowledge, have often been used by missionaries with excellent effect for the breaking up of ancient ignorance and the shattering of superstitious beliefs. The value of this service is on record, known to all missionaries. Contact with what is new is itself an awakening experience, and civilization has abundance of it to offer. But the story of missions is full of evidence against the claim that Christianity is powerless until civilization has prepared its way. Christianity has availed with the uncivilized. Christianity has been the pioneer of civilization as often and effectively as civilization has been the pioneer of Christianity. Christianity has the secret of civilization in itself, while civilization does not contain the secret of Christianity. The new faith in such a God as Christ reveals, and in the divine salvation, is a more potent uplifting influence upon the general humanity than any force of mere civilization. Here again we are dealing with spiritual forces unseen but mighty. We must reckon upon God. Powers that

purify and spiritualize the inner life of man have a fine independence; they do not always wait for civilizing influences to prepare their way, and it is well for mankind that they do not. Christianity is a better plough-share for civilization than civilization for Christianity.

We cannot escape the profoundly mortifying fact that what we occidentals call civilization too often carries to heathen peoples the wrong gift. Instead of being a pioneer for Christian faith and virtue, it often serves as the bearer of corruption and vice. It is needless to dwell upon the exportation of liquor, and the introduction of social evils in fresh forms or new abundance. All this is but too well known. In much of the current talk just now about the introduction of Christianity to new peoples through war and commerce, there is a profound ignorance of Christianity, and an effrontery that is almost incredible. Just now, civilization does not seem to be exhibiting itself most favorably as the ally of Christianity. Whether, apart from missions, the west is doing the east more good than harm, is at least an open question. At present there is more need of reminding ourselves that Christianity itself is the best of pioneers, and of counting upon an outlook that depends on the inherent excellence and power of the religion of the living holy God.



How far does the missionary outlook depend upon the attitude and fidelity of the Christian people? It might seem at first that here we have a direct equation. We are sometimes told that the prosperity of the work, and even the destiny of the heathen, will be precisely measured by the degree of our faithfulness in missionary work. Is this true?

In the large there is of course, a general equation between the spirit and manner in which the work is conducted and the results that we have a right to expect. This needs no proof, and at a glance it is plain that we have a full right to use this truth as an appeal to the Christian people. We must expect to reap as we sow, therefore we must sow intelligently and generously. The work is vast, therefore nothing short of a strong and steady prosecution of it is permissible. Not until the church rises to its large responsibility can we look for those great results which our hearts desire, and which we know the gospel is able to bring forth. This is sound teaching.

Yet this does not mean that a precise equation exists between the fidelity of the Christian people and the returns that missions will yield. There is no such equation. There are too many unequalizing elements in the case. The church at home might be full of faith, alive with zeal and wise in

planning, and under the holiest impulse might go about some task in which long delays were inevitable, and success could be obtained only after patient travelling of the road of sacrifice. We might say that the final outcome was sure, but plainly any expectation of swift returns because the work was good would be doomed to disappointment. The best work may perhaps be done to-day where the possibility of visible results is least. A universal revival of missionary zeal and fidelity would have no promise of instantaneous reward in large results: it would depend upon the conditions. And so we cannot strictly say that a new fidelity is all that is needed for swift returns. In general we might be speaking truly, but special circumstances introduce variation that is not calculable.

So on the other hand it is not strictly true that no results for good can be expected that are not provided for in the faith, zeal and wisdom of the church. Thank God for that. When the Christian people, whether with little faithfulness or with much, introduce the Christian word and life to a new realm of humanity they are bringing in an agency that has vitality of its own. The seed grows, the sower knows not how. It grows if he forgets it. When we plant the gospel of Christ, we plant something

that is not dependent upon our subsequent fidelity for its success. The knowledge of the living God goes forth as a word of eternal life, which will do its own work. Though we at home should utterly prove false to our calling, the agencies that we have started might still continue at work with divine efficiency. It is very true, and never to be forgotten, that at present, and for a long time to come, we have the work to support. Upon our attitude and fidelity depend in part the largeness of the opportunity. We may limit the work by our neglect, and if we do this we take upon ourselves a grave responsibility for any failure that may follow. Yet even thus the work has a vitality that we did not give it, and a vitality that our deadness does not destroy.

In all these aspects alike it appears that the missionary outlook is not very accurately calculable. It is not precisely determined by current events, or by relations with civilization, or by the attitude of the Christian people, though by all these it is influenced. There is always an immediate outlook for the blessing of God upon the agencies of his kingdom. Inspiring opportunities for honorable and laborious service are always opening. The work is certain to be long, and the success of it is certain to be great. There is enough of outlook to cheer us

perpetually, and enough to humble us, and enough to urge us on to our best endeavors. The end is with God, whom we can trust; and with this we must be content. We need to rise above the childish notions of what constitutes an encouraging outlook, and fix upon the great future the hopeful gaze of faith and patience.

In thinking of the outlook of missions, it is helpful to remember how inexact is the perspective in which a laborer must view the work of his own time. No just perspective is possible, indeed, save in so far as the eye of faith is able to rise to the height of God and to look out thence. But hereafter we may look back, and see things more justly. What seems long in passing may seem short in a larger and juster retrospect. It is often said that Carey and Judson were called upon to exercise great patience in the long and weary waiting of seven years, the period through which each of them had to pass before seeing the first convert. To wait for seven long years has seemed to many who have read of it almost more than could be expected of any mortal. The time did seem long, no doubt, to them, and to the Christian friends who were watching them with sympathy. To some of their critics it may have seemed so long as to be conclusive

against their project. Yet the fact was that they had landed on strange shores, ignorant of the language and the life around them, to preach in the face of ancient religions a new religion that required an intelligent and experimental faith; and surely seven years was no unreasonable time to wait for the first satisfactory convert. From this later time it looks as if converts came as soon as they could be expected. The same thing appears on a larger scale. There was a time in the history of the American Baptist Telugu mission when thirty years of devoted labor showed only a handful of converts, and there seemed to be no favorable outlook. Disappointment, weariness and despair at home almost led to the abandonment of the mission. But the historian of a later time will write that after only thirty years of patient labor by a handful of missionaries, in which the results were so small as almost to cause the work to be abandoned, there came a great ingathering,—so great that after only forty years from its beginning the mission stood forth as one of the most successful missions in the world.

Such experiences, which are not rare in the history of missions, ought to teach us not to judge by the sight of our eyes, but to estimate the outlook in view of the longer ranges of divine operation.



What seems to us as a thousand years may be to the Lord as but one day in the vast period of his working, and may seem even to us as but one day, when we have gone far enough along to discern it in its true proportions. In fact, concerning the conditions of the present time, over which all friends of missions have their perplexities and misgivings, the historian of some future century will be likely to write something like this: — “After about a hundred years, with various fortunes and large success, the missionary movement came into a period of unforeseen difficulty that seemed most serious. Hard questions arose and interest seemed to fail. In the new world that opened upon mankind in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the old modes of thought and of religious life were passing away, and the familiar motives were weakened, while the later forms of Christian thought and life had not yet been developed. A new construction of thought, feeling and endeavor was needed, but had not fully come. Many thought that the day of missions was waning to its close, but they were wrong. The gospel of the living God in Christ was as well adapted to the new age as it had been to the old. The forms that were needed came. Old motives were renewed in new conditions. The Christian

people rose slowly but surely to their calling. Christ led his church to work, and the pause in missionary interest was but momentary, in comparison with the large, strong movement of the following time."

It is an interesting fact that foreign missionaries are generally the most hopeful of men respecting the success of the missionary enterprise. Discouragement arises, but it usually arises at home, where neither the practical difficulties of the work nor the conquering powers of Christianity are beheld as they are on the field. Missionaries are generally ardent believers in the transforming power of the gospel, and their confidence is born of the hand-to-hand contest with opposing forces. It is naturally the fighters who are brave. The church at home needs to be really at work: then it will believe in the enterprise. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that in him God has come forth to the world in the victorious power of redeeming love. We ought therefore to expect victory for his gospel. The faith and hope in which we breathe such expectation form the very atmosphere of our religion. Christianity is God's own religion, and the future belongs to it, because the future belongs to him. In this confidence Christians are called to give the gospel to the world.

## XI

### THE HOME SIDE OF MISSIONS

AN important part of the missionary work must necessarily be done at home. First of all, when it began, the work had to get itself believed in, — a task that proved to be long and difficult. There were objections practical, sentimental, and doctrinal, and there was the unfailing force of inertia to be overcome. But faith and patience were not in vain, and slowly the missionary idea won its way to a place of honor and power in the hearts of the Christian people. To keep that place, and to render its working power more adequate to its undertaking, is its present task. The possession that it has obtained is far from perfect, and the true motive still needs to be made clearer and more effective. How much still remains to be done is only too plain in view of what we have called the present crisis in missions. It is evident that missions are still in great measure on the defensive at home, and have still to prove their right to the devotion of the Christian people, especially in view of the change of times and the revolution in

dominant ideas. But this necessity brings no relief from another. Whether the cause is on the defensive or not, the work that is actually in hand must be conducted, and must be supported. The planning and administration must be done at home, and at home the needful men and money must be obtained. Thus the home work is laid out by the nature of the case. It consists on the one hand in administration and money-raising, and on the other in commending the missionary idea and strengthening its hold upon the church of Christ.

In the present order of things, the work of administration and money-raising belongs, as we have seen, to the missionary society. The element of administration naturally belongs there, and must remain there while present methods continue. The collecting of money is in the hands of the society thus far, but ought not to remain there exclusively. The time ought to come when money will flow in from the Christian people, without so much seeking for it and anxiety about it. But at present it seems necessary that at home, in each denomination of Christians at least, a society or board should be maintained, not only for the administration of the missionary work abroad, but also for the collecting of revenues for the support of it. For the time, and for a good while

yet, there seems no avoiding the necessity for such organizations.

The existence of such an organization necessarily implies certain home expenses. Officers must be employed. Secretaries, as they are named, must be men of acknowledged ability and standing. There must be a treasurer, recognized in the business world as competent to the management of large affairs. Book-keeping is indispensable. Offices must be maintained, and various incidental expenses must be met. As matters go at present, there is required a large expenditure for the collecting of money from the people.

It is very common to hear sharp criticism upon the home expenses of the missionary societies. Sometimes it seems almost to be supposed that there ought to be no such expenses. Very often they are alleged to be extravagant in amount. It is necessary that the work of administration be conducted in cities, and therefore unavoidable that the scale of expenditure be that of city life and not that of life in the country. Hence it often happens that dwellers in the country, whose scale of living involves less cost, sincerely judge the salaries to be far too large, and the general home expenditure to be out of all just proportion to the necessity. And apart from such special criticisms, it is very often alleged that too large a pro-



portion of missionary receipts is devoted to home expenses. Wild talk on this subject is sometimes heard, and absurd charges circulate even among those who ought to know better, to the effect that it takes ninety cents of a dollar to get a dime to the heathen, and the like. More moderate criticism abounds, however, and is to be respected. It is always a fair subject of inquiry whether the home expenses are too large.

Concerning the general subject of home expenses, all discussion ought to begin with agreement upon one point which is sometimes left unmentioned. Home expenses, in proper amount, are exactly as legitimate as expenditures in actual missionary work abroad. Some critics of missionary societies, and some contributors to missionary funds, seem never to have fully admitted this to themselves, but rather to feel that there is a presumption against home expenses as such. But certainly there is no such presumption. Home expenses there must be. If a missionary enterprise in India is to be conducted from New York, there must be an office maintained in New York for the transaction of business, and rent must be paid for it. Money received for the work must be acknowledged to the givers, accounted for by book-keeping, deposited in bank, and transmitted to India

through the world's channels of exchange. If contributions are belated, money must be borrowed, on interest, for temporary use. Communication must be maintained with the missionaries on the field, and the general work must be conducted by competent men, experienced and large-minded, able to manage large affairs; and such men must be not only employed but supported. Incidental matters of expense will be constantly arising, with respect to which the spending of money is absolutely unavoidable. Now all this is just as proper and right, just as legitimate and worthy, as the spending of money in India for the support of missionary men and women, or the providing of indispensable facilities for their work. Moreover, as we have said, these home expenses are contracted in great centres of population and commerce, where rent and service and salaries are necessarily more costly than in the country; and it is therefore very natural, until they have taken better knowledge of the facts, that many persons who handle money only in small amounts should honestly believe the scale of expenditure to be excessive. Nevertheless these home expenses, if they do not become unnecessarily great, are just as truly a part of the proper cost of missions as any expenditures whatever that a missionary society may make. If one's con-

tribution goes into the office-rent of his missionary society, it is a contribution to missions, just as really as if it had gone into the building of a chapel or the supporting of a teacher in the valley of the Ganges. The Christian people need to be taught this, for they have never fully taken it to heart as a fact. Home expenses are never to be apologized for, unless they are greater than they ought to be.

Of course it is true, however, that home expenses constantly tend to increase. The general scale of expenditure in business in our cities grows more liberal in some respects, and perhaps in the very directions that are most suggestive in missionary administration. Leading minds relieve themselves of detail by employing more and more help; and this is done in the interest of sound economy, though it creates new bills. The tendency to substitute a little expenditure for a little exertion by an official who is carrying unlimited responsibility is both right and wise within its due limits, and yet in the administration of trust money it needs to be watched with jealous care. It is only the suggestion of common wisdom and propriety that missionary societies owe it alike to the givers and to the laborers on the field to keep the home expenses just as small as they can wisely and economically be made.

How large a proportion of its receipts a society is justified in spending for home expenses is an interesting question, perhaps, but a question that cannot be answered. No rule is possible. Conscientious and careful societies differ considerably among themselves in this respect. Conditions will vary from time to time. A large increase in receipts would ordinarily bring down the percentage of home expenditure; for there are certain expenditures that are unavoidable whether the work is larger or smaller, and the cost of administration becomes relatively less if receipts become great. Therefore one good way to bring down the ratio of the home expense is to bring in more money for the work. As to the practical question which is so often asked, whether the home expenses of our great societies are greater than they ought to be, one would need close acquaintance and remarkable judgment to answer it. Outside opinions are worth very little. Perhaps all administrators know that in some points they might spend less than they do. Errors of judgment now and then occur, and perhaps a sinful carelessness may sometimes creep in. But as for sweeping condemnations of our great societies for extravagant administration at home, they are simply false. It is not a fact that gifts for missions are recklessly spent at home. As for the wild talk

about the small fraction of a dollar given that finally succeeds in getting to the heathen, it probably cannot be stopped, any more than slanders generally, but it ought at least to be discouraged. There is one society that has been accustomed every year to transmit for actual work on the foreign field more than it received from living givers, legacies and income from invested funds more than balancing the expenditures at home. The same may very probably be true of other societies. And there is one missionary board that has recently considered the propriety of diminishing the salaries of its executive officers, in deference to the opinion that they are too large; and after an exhaustive examination of the case, it was decided that it would not be in accordance with good policy and wise administration to make the salaries smaller. So they remain as they were, but in consequence of a deliberate judgment.

In one respect, however, the home expenses are too large. The collecting of money for missionary purposes costs more than it ought to be allowed to cost. Various societies have different experiences in regard to this, but it is generally true that the collecting agencies form a heavy burden of expense. When it is proposed to make this burden less by dispensing with the agencies intermediate between the congrega-



tions and the societies, the obvious answer is that if they are dispensed with the money will not be forthcoming, and that is an intolerable condition. The societies live from hand to mouth as it is, and are walking by faith not only in God but in man, whenever they make their appropriations, and they cannot expose themselves to any greater risk of losing income than is upon them all the time. They must collect the money or it will not come. They would hold a jubilee of gratitude and joy if this heavy expenditure could once for all be stopped.

Of course it is true that the collecting agencies are to some extent educative agencies also. Representatives of the missionary cause carry to the people information about the work, and discuss principles in their hearing, and labor to increase zeal for the great enterprise. This educational character in their work does something to justify the cost of employing district secretaries and the like. But the entire method, so expensive and laborious, ought to be only temporary. There is a better way of raising money and of nourishing missionary interest. Special agencies like these may for a long time be needed here and there, but the larger part of such work ought to be done by the churches and their pastors, without help from beyond themselves. Efficiency waits for the day

when the Christian people shall intelligently adopt the missionary work as a part of their own regular calling, and keep themselves informed because they are interested, and contribute their money for missions as a matter of course. This is the ideal way, and toward this all desires and efforts should be directed. The way to reduce home expenses is for the churches to do their own collecting. As long as they make it expensive to collect their contributions, they have no right to complain of the expense. Yet as a matter of fact it is just here, in churches that will not give unless money is spent in gathering their contributions, that criticism upon home expenses is apt to be sharpest and most persistent.

This leads up to what must be said about the pastor and his relation to the home work of missions. The pastor is the natural leader of his people, and the pastors as a class ought to be the main reliance for efficiency in the missionary work at home. A few of the things that a pastor may reasonably be supposed to do for the promotion of the cause may be mentioned here.

A pastor, whatever his Christian denomination may be, and through whatever agencies his church may work, ought to make sure that he is well ac-

quainted with the missionary agencies of his own denomination. This seems very little to ask, and yet there are many pastors who do not fulfil this simple and just requirement. Many a pastor really knows very little about his missionary society or board. From such ignorance serious misunderstandings often come. The minister misconceives the work and is liable to misrepresent it; perhaps in his ignorance he falls into unjust prejudices; he cannot properly enlist the support of his people for the work. Even if he does not misrepresent the cause, he is likely to be indifferent about it if he is not well informed. There is no substitute for interest in the work, and there is none for intelligence about it. A pastor has need of both. The true loyal interest leads a minister to regard the missionary agencies of his church as his own, and to live in friendly fellowship with them.

There is a personal element in the pastor's relation here. A pastor needs to have faced the question whether he himself ought to be a foreign missionary. Some ministers of Christ ought to be laborers abroad, and of course one who ought to be there ought not to be a pastor at home. One whose rightful field of labor is at home needs to know that fact, and to know it on sufficient grounds. If he does not, he may be haunted by doubts whether he is not in the wrong

place. Many a pastor has no freedom in dealing with the cause of foreign missions, from a secret fear lest if the truth were known he ought to be a missionary himself. Some pastors secretly know that they have never done justice to the question, and therefore avoid the subject when they can. Every young man who is entering the ministry should fairly meet the question of his duty to enter the missionary work, and settle it honestly, in the sight of God. Only thus can a man be as conscientious in staying at home for his work as he would be in going abroad under the sense of a divine call. An unjudged presumption in favor of working at home is not the satisfactory thing that a clear conviction of duty is. Only by passing through such an experience of clear decision can a minister count with certainty upon being a free and unhampered friend of missions through a lifetime at home.

It seems very little to say that a pastor should keep himself informed about missions in general, for the duty seems quite obvious. Yet this must be said. Very few men, indeed, can be experts in so broad a field of information, and yet every pastor ought to be acquainted, in a general way at least, with the great fields of the world, the principles of missionary administration, and the work of the most

eminent laborers, both living and dead. This is not too much to ask. A pastor who does not thus look out broadly upon the great movement of Christianity in the world, and is not qualified by knowledge for the task of enlisting Christians in the present work of their Lord, does not truly represent Christ to his people. A Christian minister who is ignorant of missions is defective at a vital point.

His people, as well as himself, a pastor should keep informed as to the broad outlook of the missionary work. He ought to be in his general character a missionary man, — that is, a man from whose constant influence his people will learn that there is a kingdom of God in the world to which they owe a joyful love and loyalty, and the movements of which they will find unspeakably interesting. He should never let the missionary enterprise go out of sight or be forgotten. He should never directly or indirectly apologize for missions as a part of the work of the church. When he asks for money, he should make it plain why money is needed. He should so conceive and present the work as to convince his people that he trusts them to be responsive to reasonable calls, addressed to their intelligence and Christian feeling. He must remember that permanent interest in missions depends largely upon knowledge, and that



knowledge must not be allowed to be too far behind the times. In many of our churches there is a strong and sacred traditional interest in missions, — a most excellent possession, for which we ought to be most thankful, and which the minister should not fail to utilize for present purposes. But traditional interest, if that is all, cannot be counted upon to live in freshness from generation to generation, especially when dominant thoughts are changing as they are now. The interest must be revived by contact with living facts; and of these the supply is never wanting. A new generation must not be allowed to grow up without a good knowledge of missions, or without being plainly told in terms of the new time and thought what the missionary motive is. All interest of young men and women in the work is true theme for gratitude, and pastors should by all means nourish it and turn it to use.

A pastor should make the missionary interest a constant theme in public prayer. Public prayer should not merely utter the petitions of the moment, it should guide and form the habit of spiritual desire for the people. In liturgical churches the kingdom of God in the world is never forgotten, but in churches where extemporaneous prayer prevails the field of request is often scarcely larger than the congregation.

In ordinary circumstances, a congregation should never be allowed to go home from public worship without having the kingdom of God throughout the world brought home to them in prayer, and having their hearts drawn out to pray for all men and all work for the good of men. A minister who regularly and habitually prays for missions thereby shows that he has begun to behold his true horizon.

What is said of the home side of missions may well include a word upon home criticism of the missionary work, and the light in which it should be regarded. There has always been unfavorable criticism, and certainly it will continue. It has abounded since the troubles in China began, for it has been convenient to lay the wrath of the Chinese to the charge of those who were offering them a new religion. But the accusation will not live long; in fact, it is already meeting its answer. All foreign elements have doubtless been offensive to the Chinese; but to represent the quiet teachers of religion as the real cause of the outbreak, when the exasperating aggressions of the western powers are known by all men, is to bring an accusation that must be short-lived. The world is too intelligent to hold it long.

But in other ways unfriendly criticism is sure to be encountered. A hostile spirit is in the air. Just now, the inborn heathenism of unregenerate humanity is asserting itself afresh in selfishness and war. The prevailing temper toward the distant parts of the world is hard, unspiritual, greedy. What is worth having, the western nations want for themselves. The extension of western power into eastern regions is proposed for the sake of the west, not of the east, and there is little hesitation about saying so, though sometimes, not too convincingly, the philanthropic motive is put forward. In fact, the great world-movements of the day are in a high degree unspiritual and anti-spiritual, distinctly disowning the finer motives, and glorifying self-aggrandizement. The revival of the war-spirit is always a reawakening of the brute in man, and such a revival is upon us now in force, just when our relations with the newly-opened world are calling most urgently for the mind of Christ.

At such an hour, Christian missions are sure to meet disparagement. In spirit, they are the very opposite of this temper of the time. Missions are always unselfish in their large and generous aim. They belong to another world than that of war and greed and ambition, for they express love, and work

out the designs of helpfulness. They spring from respect for the oriental peoples, and condemn that contempt which is now so popular. In a word, they represent the spiritual in human life. It is not to be expected that missions will go through the present period without falling under the reproof and disparagement of the spirit of the time. Good people will yield to the influence, more or less, and join with the age in suspecting that missions properly belong to a softer time, when less energetic motives are abroad. What is the use, it will be said, of sending forth sheep in the midst of wolves? Some will despise such a mission as out of keeping with the spirit of the age, and some will despair of it as a hopeless thing; and both classes will be indifferent about the actual work.

Such criticism ought to be expected, and ought to be understood. To understand it is not difficult; it simply indicates the opposition of the unchristlike world to the spirit of Jesus. Jesus himself encountered such opposition, and foretold it for his friends in the work of his kingdom. It is infinitely sad that the lower powers in humanity are breaking out so violently at the end of the nineteenth Christian century, but the practical duty that follows is plain. The rising of evil is the call of God. All who de-

light in the things of the spirit, all who prize love and helpfulness and peace, all who wish the best for humanity and know that the holiest is the best, ought to regard the present situation as a summons to give heart and hand to the gracious work of Christian missions. Never was the great spiritual contrast more visible in the world than it is to-day, and never did the word of the Lord go forth more clearly, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Ultimately, he will rally the lovers of goodness to the support of the missionary purpose, but he needs them now; and what shall we think of ourselves if we hear his voice and let him call in vain for us? Let all who love the sweeter, stronger element in life, and believe in love and holiness, join in the name of Jesus Christ in this service to God and man.



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